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THE SEVEN TORCHES OF CHARACTER

BOOKS BY

BASIL KING

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

FAITH AND SUCCESS

GIANT'S STRENGTH

GOING WEST

GRISELDA

HIGH HEART

IN THE GARDEN OF CHARITY

LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER

STEPS OF HONOR

THE ABOLISHING OF DEATH

THE CITY OF COMRADES

THE CONQUEST OF FEAR

THE INNER SHRINE

THE LETTER OF THE CONTRACT

THE LIFTED VEIL

THE SEVEN TORCHES OF CHARACTER

THE SIDE OF THE ANGEL

THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

THE THREAD OF FLAME

THE WAY HOME

WILD OLIVE

THE SEVEN TORCHES OF CHARACTER

BY

BASIL KING



1929

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"In front of the Throne Seven Torches of Fire burn—the Seven Spirits of God."

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Character and Human Nature . .	1
II.	Character and Motive	20
III.	Character and Grace	49
IV.	Character and Work	75
V.	Character and Play	123
VI.	Character and Social Life . . .	199
VII.	Character and Conquest . . .	244

THE SEVEN TORCHES OF CHARACTER

CHAPTER I

CHARACTER AND HUMAN NATURE

I

IT IS a curious fact that character, in the sense in which we commonly use the word to-day, is a concept little older than from fifty to a hundred years.

The ancients scarcely formed it. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the other great philosophers talked round about it, but never closed in on it, making it a definite idea. They discussed the ingredients of character, virtue, vice, the good, the beautiful, the true, but they did it in the abstract. They left these themes as quarrymen leave the blocks of stone they hew from the rock, making no attempt to fit them together and build with them. In the Platonic dialogues, with their long procession of youths and men, this one or that one is often successfully hit off by some trick of mind or speech; but no one is ever presented as the compound of qualities which make him a man distinct from every other man. For the fre-

quenters of the Grove and the Academy types were enough. The individual struggling in the conflict between will and desire was a stage beyond their meditations. In their debates they implied him, but explicitly their thoughts did not go far enough to embody or explain him.

To the Hebrew chronicler, on the other hand, the individual was an actual entity but only in his relation to God or to the principles of right and wrong. In presenting this aspect of man they threw off a series of crude portraits of a power unequalled in any other ancient literature, but they give them only as illustrations. Once this end is served the chronicler has no scruple in casting the originals on the scrap heap. Merely as men and women those originals have no claim to an interest of their own. Contrary to what is generally supposed, the Old Testament has in it no strain of true history or true biography. At the time it was compiled and composed the historic spirit had not yet been born among the people who produced it. All that was sought was a record of that people's progress toward God, or of its falling away from him. This made, no individual, were it Noah, Daniel, or Job, was worthy of analysis on his own account.

In the revolutionary teaching of Jesus, with its strong emphasis on the rights of the poor, the outcast, and the disinherited, it might have been supposed that the individual, merely as an individual, would get recognition at last. And so for a while he did. In the earliest *ecclesiæ,* or meetings, of Christians mutual love and service between gentle and simple was the special and peculiar sign of the high calling. But that was in the first enthusiasm. Little by little the *ecclesia* changed its note. Instead of its supreme service being found in deeds of love it was seen in submission to the *ecclesia* itself. The *ecclesia* had been at first for man; now man began to be for the *ecclesia.* An organization was substituted for a Way of Life. The individual so dear to Jesus Christ that he had for a short time seemed on the point of emerging to the light dropped back to being the chattel of the *ecclesia* or nothing. You might have said that up to the eve of the Reformation, when a new spirit seemed to stir, it was not worth while for the individual to have character. With no need for such expression of himself he had no need for the word. But as soon as the need began to assert itself the word was ready to his hand.

II

The Greek χαρακτήρ meant in the first place a sharp-pointed instrument or graving tool. Later it applied to the mark made or the thing engraved. Later still it acquired the figurative meaning of style in writing or the arts. The Latins who borrowed the word, probably pronouncing it in the Greek way, *char-ac-teer,* used it in the Greek sense and in that only. Into English it crept with Wyclif and the later Plantagenet writers, gaining an extension of meaning by being used of the letters of the alphabet, just then, through the work of Gutenberg, Caxton, and Aldus, becoming familiar to the eye. Shakespeare, always eager to enlarge his vocabulary, employs the new word some twenty-six times, but never in any but the Greek or Latin sense, or as referring to the characters in printed books. In Spenser it is found three times; in Milton once; in the Old and New Testaments not at all.

The point to be noted here is this, that if the word was scarcely current, it was because that summing up of qualities which make a man and give him his uniqueness had not yet become part of mental chemistry. That each human heart was

the background of passions, ambitions, follies, weaknesses, greatnesses, and whatever else belongs to the creature half human, half divine, was evident enough. It had been the stuff out of which the dramatists, from Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides down to Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson had peopled their magic worlds. But they saw their creations as *personæ,* not as characters. Between the two there is a difference. A person is indefinite; a character, clear cut. A person may be anything; a character can only be what his peculiar combination of mental chemicals makes of him. In a person you have only to discover; in a character you meet the higher and harder task of analysis. To the ancient the ruler of destiny was Fate; it was only on the modern mind that the big truth dawned that Fate is character.

These are facts that even Shakespeare did not know explicitly. Intuitively he reached their results, but it is unlikely that he could have told you why. When we speak of his characters we do so correctly enough from our point of view, though he would not have recognized the term. He had never heard of character in our sense. Far from seeing it as Fate, Fate was for him as

often as not a fortuitous thing, a sword, or a frolic, or an act of violence. It was an end to which men and women came by all sorts of chances, not the objective to which they were led by their own beings as directly as if they had no power of going any other way.

A similar reservation, if it is a reservation, must be borne in mind as to using a term so definitely concrete of people for whom the concrete was but faintly a consideration. When we speak, for instance, of the character of Cæsar, the character of Plato, the character of David, the character of Jesus, it should not be forgotten that we are applying a modern test to ancient essences. This is wholly legitimate, provided we remember that the test can never be quite accurate. The modern mind, with its habit of schedules, time tables, and punchings of the clock, has a click of precision hardly possible to those who lived before the opening of the Nineteenth Century. Topics of interest to the ancient world were general and impersonal to a degree which to us makes for dullness. We of to-day like to come to such material with a square and a yardstick. It is remarkable how little of the teaching of Jesus is other than a laying down of principles in the

large. The same may be said of Plato, of Plotinus, of Chrysostom, of Augustine. Close reasoning on vast themes was the history of the Church from the early days of the eclipse of Jesus down to the eve of the Sixteenth Century. To judge of such an epoch and of those who made it up in the modern terms of character, with their sharpness and hardness of exactitude, is, in a measure, to try to reduce the colossal imagery of the Divine Apocalypse into a series of syllogistic statements. The processes of the one are so different from those of the other that great caution must be used in making the transposition. Music composed in one key can never be quite the same in another key, even when rendered note for note. At the same time, to think retroactively, according as new phrases are developed, must be permitted if we are to think at all. My only point is that the new phrases lead us on so subtly to new understandings that when we bring them to bear on old subjects, to which they were never intended to apply, the method has its dangers.

III

New phrases come to us to meet new perceptions. The new perception may be as slow in

developing as a stormy dawn in waxing into day, and yet the new phrase will generally be found keeping pace with it. When the bud in the mind has opened into flower the name for it will be there.

It was exactly so with the concept and the name of character. It was a word to commend itself both by sound and by look. Once heard it was not likely to be forgotten, even though its real meaning was obscure. It seems to have remained so obscure that as late as Dryden's time it was necessary to define it in terms such as might be used to-day. "A character," he writes, "or that which distinguishes one man from all others cannot be supposed to consist of one particular virtue, or vice, or passion only; it is a composition of qualities which are not contrary to one another in the same person." In other words, character is a blend; and it is the nature of the blend which gives it its worth, or its lack of it.

But we must reach the Nineteenth Century before it grows apparent to the average thinking man that the nature of that blend is the dominating factor in a human being's life. The inference which must have been obvious through all

time began to be drawn at last. The value of human society was basically in the value of the individual; and the value of the individual was basically in the stronger elements he had permitted to develop in himself.

I myself clearly remember when the statement that a man was what his character made him and could be neither more nor less was so new as to be thrilling. The occasion on which this was first brought to my personal attention was a lecture by Henry Ward Beecher, somewhere in the early 'seventies, and what he said on the subject was a novelty to all. To a growing lad it was of the nature of a revelation. It gave a new incentive to a boy's struggle after self-control, always to himself so tragic and desperate, with a new hope that the battle was not lost before it had begun.

I recall this incident only to show that right on the verge of the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century it was not a platitude to say to an audience that character was a man's first and most important preoccupation. Twenty years later, when, in testifying before the Pujo Investigating Committee, the late John Pierpont Morgan coined the aphorism, "character is the basis of

credit," he expressed a truth so far as yet from being self-evident that by the next morning it had gone round the world.

IV

Still less has it been self-evident that, in the midst of a life in which so much is beyond our personal control, character is an aspect of being of which the master is essentially the man himself. It is what the man himself decides to make of it. Always in a state of flux, it is always subject to his will. Though it may seem to be fixed, because his habits have been formed, as a matter of fact, it is never so. At seventy or eighty it is still liable to change. At forty or fifty or sixty it is as easily moulded as, to use the ancient simile, clay by the hands of the potter. For a weak or pernicious character the possessor has but himself to blame; for a helpful or lofty one he gets the reward which always crowns the builder whose work is strong and beautiful. To this he attains not by luck, nor by inheritance, but by toil, attention, tireless self-correction, pains, drudgery, repentances, till inch by inch and foot by foot his structure has been raised.

Nothing that could free man from that belief

in his own helplessness which had been his age-long curse was ever half so effective as this new consciousness. Not that men had never come to it before. They had; but they had come to it as scattered individuals, a bit farther-sighted than their fellows, and not as a racial group. Now it began to be established as a fact which anyone could know who gave it as much as a passing attention. The man who was master of his character was also the master of his fate.

To my mind this is the last new step in the pathway of human liberation. Nothing is more depressing in the history of our race than the way in which the vast hordes of humankind have lain down under their injustices and borne them with no protest stronger than a sigh. The farther we dig back into the history of man, the more it becomes apparent that the many have always let themselves be exploited by the few and have seen no help for it. Ziggurats and pyramids imply a control of man power on a scale that takes the breath away. More than as symbols of the might of the few, they stand as proof of the utter enslavement of the vast majority. The few were those who had developed for themselves the force that we should call character. It was the

first means of their domination. They ruled by it. Whether that rule were wise and kind or brutal and oppressive, it was in the hands of those who had made their own personalities strong. When they permitted themselves to grow weak again, power was snatched away by those more competent to hold it.

But that countless stricken majority, supine in its lethargy, never thought of doing anything but bending its back to the whip. From our point of view, imperfect as that is, it is the most astounding phenomenon in history. Generation after generation, century after century, human beings by the billion, trillion, and quadrillion spent their time on this planet in being cuffed and kicked about and seeing no help for it. Only by degrees slower than the movement of a glacier did the idea seep through to a consciousness drugged by immemorial suffering that there might be some relief. If we needed a sign that, in spite of all its recessions, the human race does progress, we could see it in the change between popular opinion now and the same thing four or five hundred years ago, while if we went back four or five thousand years we should find no popular opinion of any kind. It is a far cry from the groaning

processions knouted to the building of the pyramid of Cheops to the modern man with head erect and shoulders squared, saying, "Character is Fate, and I can control them both"; and yet the advance has been made.

Not that we have gone all the way even yet. Indeed, we have scarcely started. To an appalling degree the population of the world is still made up of under dogs with almost no impulse to react against their condition. Where such reaction obtains it is oftener than not put into operation in a way which makes it reducible by force. To protect the many against exploitation by the few, the many can think of nothing better than some form of hitting back. To right economic wrongs by such methods as socialism, communism, bolshevism, or any of the kindred means, is like bringing Big Bertha to attack an infection by bacteria. There are ways of subverting man's inhumanity to man, but they will not be found in further inhumanity. For many years now this method has been used, and yet the hostile forces still confront each other, neither backing down, but neither making progress. So it will continue till we work on to the next step, now becoming clear.

It is probable that one man who develops a character wise, strong, and humane, does more to counteract social and economic wrongs than a strike of miners or railwaymen. He puts into the world what the world needs more than it needs an increase in water power, a big human asset. He gives us a man who first thinks and then tries to make himself equal to his thinking. Of these has always been that Kingdom of Heaven which is most of what we know of God. One such man alone is a power; multiply him by a thousand and you get that power a thousandfold plus; multiply that thousand by another hundred thousand, which, after all, is no such great number, and you have the means of bringing in a new heaven and a new earth.

V

But there the action languishes. Having reached a point in evolution at which we see something of what character can do, we seem inclined to leave the whole subject at the stage of the copybook maxim. One might have supposed that so rich a discovery would bring crowds of prospectors. One might have looked for schools for the building of character to

throng on each other, as schools for getting out gold spring up in the wake of a gold rush. But not so. Our Christian world has a marvellous faculty for leaving a beautiful ideal as a beautiful ideal, to preach about, to sing about, and even to brag about, but not to turn to practical account. I have said that it is some fifty years since we attained to the knowledge that formation of character is our preëminent concern, but I have never heard of any concentrated movement to put that knowledge into working effect. A few references in churches, in schools, in didactic addresses, in moral works for the young have been thought enough to give to one of the mightiest conclusions ever reached by man.

Of this the explanation probably is that few of us know as yet of the dynamo we possess in our developed selves. So schooled are we to the idea that as individuals we don't amount to much that it will take more than an increase of vision on the part of a handful of enthusiasts to produce a change of action. When St. John wrote: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," he could, had he seen with the eyes of the Twentieth Century, have made it: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even

our character." Character *is* Faith, as much as it is Fate. It is confidence, decision, foreknowledge, almost the gift of prophecy. Because character must have already achieved in order to be character, it must be sure of its power to go on achieving. Faith must work or it is dead, and it is the supreme mark of character that it also works. It works to deliver man from his overwhelming ills, and, like Faith, like Hope, like Love, it has its special key to life. To give some idea of how character can be formed by those who perhaps have never tried to form it will be the purpose of these pages.

VI

This will be difficult owing to the fact that no one ever starts out to build a character in the same deliberate way in which he starts to build a house. In the first place, there is no question of doing it from the ground upward, which might be relatively simple. The ground is already covered; some sort of structure already stands on it. Something may be permitted to remain; much, probably, will have to be pulled down. Reconstruction and better construction must be taken as the rule.

And this must be done in no small degree incidentally. The self is a ticklish subject to tackle. With too much attention bestowed on it, it easily becomes a prig. The minute I say to myself "I must build myself a character; I must become strong, wise, and dynamic," the chances are that I shall defeat my own ends. Too much introspection, too much study of one's self even for purposes of self-correction, is likely to produce an egocentric morbidity. I must take myself by surprise, so to speak, with a quick touch here and a deft suggestion there, while I give myself chiefly to external things. The duties I must do, the friends I must be kind to, the interests I must serve, these must be my outer preoccupations, while I attend to my character indirectly.

That is to say, there can be no rule, no prescription, no set plan which anyone may follow and from which his results will be sure. The utmost that I can do is to set forth what seem to me a few of the basic principles of character, leaving anyone so disposed to make his own effort to apply them. Even so he will be unable to take them systematically, as the builder of a house takes first the foundation, then the outlines of the structure, and last of all the roof. He

must go at them all together, repairing in one place, tearing down in another, and making new additions to a third, and do it all at once.

As the only method possible this one will be clear to you the minute you think of yourself. You already have a character of some sort. Incipiently it was born with you; like a blind monster it has grown with you, now wallowing in the mud, now aspiring heavenward, but always yearning, dissatisfied, passionate; heroic yesterday, vile to-day, and perhaps remorseful to-morrow. You recognize the mixture. If you are the average person you abhor it and at the same time feel for it a glow of tenderness. Gladly you would strain out what is ugly and strengthen what is beautiful and true. Well, then, let us talk it over together. Not that I am by any means an expert on the subject or have any claim to spiritual insight beyond what is common to us all. Nothing entitles me to speak, even with hesitation, but the fact that ever since, in my boyhood, I heard the great preacher emphasize the ruling power of character I have reflected, with such powers as I have, on what makes the character that rules. Where I have reached conclusions I will say so; where I have not, I will say so too.

This I shall beg leave to do with the reservation St. Paul made, in a similar situation, for himself, "not as though I had already attained." Like everyone else I have attained to very little; but if we never spoke except to the degree of our attainment, much that might be helpful would be left unsaid.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER AND MOTIVE

I

IF YOU were to ask me what I consider most fundamental to the character that means power I should have no hesitation as to what to say: Humility.

It takes some courage to make this declaration for the reason that humility is the one Christian grace which Christians at all times have openly rejected. The very word will make the high-spirited impatient. In the impulsive mind it is confused with hypocrisy or with the inferiority complex. To many of us it has a crawling, fawning suggestion, like the obsequiousness of Uriah Heap. Better the braggart, we would say, better the conceited ass than the man who strives to be humble.

This opinion is so general that it is difficult to counteract it. And yet we may take it for granted that humility would not have been commended by the Highest Authority on character

had it not been a basic essential. To see its fundamental reference to life we had better perhaps hark back to the source from which we get the word and see why it was coined.

It comes, of course, from the Latin word *humilis,* lowly, which comes in its turn from *humus,* the ground. In that word is the greatness of the quality; it is of the very soil of life. Soil and seed together represent the richest and most primal wonder of our planet. Germination is a mystery over which it is easy to become lyrical; but there is a germination of man's spirit not less marvellous than that of seeds. There is a "ground" for man's inner self which gives him his vitality. When he is torn up from it the best within him dies.

II

Perhaps it will clear the way for us if I point out briefly some of the differences between humility and what we have come to know as the inferiority complex. In doing this I shall use the term not perhaps in its strictly Freudian sense, but as a convenient expression for covering a variety of common states of mind.

1. In the first place humility is not synony-

mous with any form of shrinking from responsibility. There is a type of which the impulse, when confronted with new, and possibly wider, work says to itself: "Oh, I could never do that," or "That is a job I should never be able to swing." Humility knows no sense of failure in advance. Its prompting, when called to new tasks, is to say: "There's a way of doing this which I don't know, but which I could learn." Its emphasis is on the learning. Its inspiration springs from the knowledge of unused resources. It is cautious without being self-distrustful, willing to go slowly without hanging back. Its sense of difficulty is rather a sense of thoroughness, and if it refuses a trust it is only because it knows on reflection that there is a better way.

2. Neither has humility anything in common with that distressing self-consciousness which compels a man to feel that in some secret way he is an object of contempt. It is the curse of more men than we commonly suppose to feel that others can make themselves noticed, while they are insignificant. Others count, while they are overlooked. Others get the big publicity, while they are never mentioned. Others are promoted, while they stay where they have been.

The deficiency is galling and yet remains incurable. "There's something queer about me," says the bitter heart, and sums it up in that. But in this there is no element of humility. When the humble spirit stops to think of itself it is never in undervaluation. If it cannot impress itself on groups and crowds, it knows it has its value in other worth-while ways. Understanding that the spirit distributes a diversity of gifts, humility is quick to praise those of others while satisfied there is merit in its own.

3. Still less has humility that sense of social values which bends in exaggerated deference before the highly placed. The highly placed have their claims which humility acknowledges, but it acknowledges them sanely. Questions of social standing it dismisses with courtesy toward all and thinks no more about them. With a self-respect that is specially its own, it assumes its ability to meet occasions as they come and leaves the matter there.

4. Nor does humility enter into the weakness we know as false modesty. There are people who depreciate themselves in order that they may be praised. Praise is what they feed upon, and, unable to get enough of it spontaneously, they invent

situations in which nothing but rudeness can refuse it. Humility is too much occupied with vital things to fix its mind on applause. Applause is no part of its scheme of things. If it is given, well and good; if it is not given, no harm is done. As a feature in life it is outside the range of humility's preoccupations. It would be foolish not to welcome it, more foolish to disdain it, and most foolish of all to regret it when it doesn't come. To think of it at all, unless the thought be fleeting, springs from a consciousness of inferiority.

5. Humility has also no part in self-pity. This danger to the character is only an element in that concentration on the self to which the weak are liable. The strong, even the selfishly, brutally strong, are concentrated on externals. Only the weak turn inward on themselves.

6. To understand humility at all it should be recognized at once that it is not the virtue of the weak. The weak are the self-assertive, the bumptious, the aggressive. All domineering, all bullying, even that tendency to control the lives of others which is often ascribed to strength of character, are signs of weakness. Signs of weakness are also conceit, self-righteousness, and

brag. But perhaps nothing grinds the sense of inferiority into one's heart and soul like the common question: What do others think of me?

7. That we should avoid this question totally is, I suppose, impossible; nor indeed would it be right to do so. Some record we must keep of the impressions we make on the social life around us, were it for no other purpose than that of self-correction. What I mean is the perpetual curiosity, amounting to self-torture, that some of us display as to whether on this occasion or on that others have liked us, disliked us, or scarcely thought of us at all. It pursues us; it haunts us; we invent a thousand petty means of finding out. When we have found out we are unduly elated or unduly cast down, as the case may be. Having no real standard of our own we have nothing to be true to. We would rather please by an exhibition of our poorer qualities than offend by putting forth our best.

8. It is not humility that seeks for inordinate good opinion; it is self-love. Self-love takes many disguises, and all of them are subtle. To shrink from taking part in some good undertaking through fear of unfavourable criticism is self-love. To be afraid to go to the defence of those

whom others are condemning is self-love. To dread being misunderstood, or unpopular, or on the losing side, are all forms of self-love. Self-love itself implies a sense of inferiority, for in large hearts love goes outward. Only in the small and shrivelled ones does it turn inward on the self, with a half-embittered adulation.

9. Among lesser signs of inferiority is the habit of looking for slights. Ascribed to a nature delicately sensitive, it is nothing but self-love in one of the more odious of its forms. As a matter of fact, slights fly round all of us like sounds on the ether waves. The ordinary, hard-working, healthy mind is not organized to pick them up. But here and there will be a nature specially attuned to the task and to suffer from the effort. Such capacity for suffering is even regarded as a higher gift than most of us possess, an exquisite vibration which the coarser fibred do not know. Not a bit of it! Rather it betrays a kind of auto-intoxication, injurious to the individual and hateful to the looker-on. Slights come, of course, but what of it? We mete out as many as we get. Who are we that we should be exempt from stings from which the best and greatest are not free? What have we done to entitle us to specially

favourable treatment? We may be hurt, but who is not? Life is a great give-and-take, and humility consists largely in learning to play the game with sportsmanship.

10. Lastly, we may set down as a token of inferiority the air of being superior which some people cultivate and manage to convey. Always ridiculous, it is not always seen for what it is. No one needs to put up the bluff of superiority who is not conscious of deficiencies he is trying to conceal. The silent brag of money, of birth, of social standing, of sensitive refinement, even of better days, is needed to bolster up only a character that would totter without it. Humility sweeps from the thought snobbery, pretentiousness, affectation, and all kind of foolish make-believe, founding the character on what is sound and simple.

III

For if in the composition of humility we were to seek a main ingredient I think it would have to be simplicity. In that which is *humilis,* near the ground, it seems as if simplicity must be a primary element.

And yet it is the last perfection among the

many perfections we strive to acquire. All the arts will tell us that. Style that lacks simplicity may have merits just the same, but it will not possess the highest. In painting, singing, acting, writing, in all kinds of creative or interpretive work, every other beauty is easier to master than simplicity. In human intercourse, in social address, it enters more largely than we usually reckon into the grace we know as charm.

It is often remarked that the great people are the simplest, and this is true. There is a man at this minute in the United States who, I think, must be the greatest living benefactor of mankind, and yet so simple is he, and so little does he make of his amazing gifts to men, that it is doubtful whether every reader of these lines would immediately name him. In any other country honours would be so heaped on him that he would be one of the three or four most conspicuous characters. Here he comes and goes not nearly as much noticed as a popular politician, a movie actor, or a foreign prince. This man was born simple because he was born great. Of hundreds of others could the same thing be said. "Such a dear simple old man," a neighbour of Thomas Hardy's wrote me a few days ago, when

that sympathetic genius passed away. It is to the credit of mankind that probably the same epitaph could be written over the vast majority of those who have proved to be blessings to our race.

IV

Assuming then that humility is the groundwork of character, and that of humility simplicity will be the first visible effect, how do we attain to simplicity?

1. First of all, in being one's self and nobody else. This is of more importance than at a first glance we may presume. Few of us are ourselves as we really are; not all of us can afford to be. But allowing for reserves, for something I naturally feel I must keep in my secret heart, to be myself as I am, unaffected and frank, will remain the asset of highest value I can contribute to the world.

To begin with, there is no one else who reproduces me. I am truly unique. It is perhaps the most marvellous of all the marvels of creation that each one of the millions who drift unnoticed and unnoticeable along a city's streets is able to say that of himself. It seems to be an axiom con-

cerning God that he never repeats himself. It is certainly true that, as far as the human race has ever been able to observe, no two of us have ever been identical. In features, in gifts, in disposition, each is meant apparently to be a special contribution, and each a contribution of something the world may be assumed to need. That the contribution comes to be considered worthless, even by its possessor, does not do away with the fact that it has been made, and made in a form which is myself.

When, therefore, I speak of being myself as the first step in simplicity, which is the first step in humility, which is the first step in the building of a character, that is the self I mean. And to be it is not so difficult as at first thought it may seem, for the reason that though we may ignore it, we never lose sight of it. Everyone knows what he really is. He is this and that, he is thus and so, and about it he is under no misapprehension. Far as he may depart from it, he knows he can go back instantaneously to what it is. Men sitting on their cots in prison cells, serving sentences for crimes for which they know they are being punished justly, say to themselves: "That was not my real self at

all. It was a false self, a self I created, a self I put in place of that which God gave me, who did those things, not the actual I." Between the criminal in his cell and the perfectly respectable citizen there will be all possible degrees of those who are saying something similar.

The difficulty we encounter here is that from an early age most of us accustom ourselves to imitating someone else. Even as boys and girls at school there are those whom we admire, whose ways we copy, whose speech we adopt, and whom we do our best to resemble. This is excellent so long as it doesn't go beyond the correction of one's faults; but there mere copying should end. Between self-correction and putting on airs it may often be hard to draw the line, and yet, I think, any average common sense can do it with a little thought.

In the effort to form character affectation is one of the most subtle of the many hindrances because it kills the simple self. It does not confine itself to the surface of life; it works its way underneath. The simple self always has a charm, the charm of what is genuine. Once we pretend to what is not ours the genuine disappears, and with it disappears the charm. With it disappears

most of what we value, since a poisonous essence has been injected into the whole system. To build on the false is like building on rotted piles, inviting future collapse.

That the simple self has a charm, and each simple self its own peculiar charm, is something to be remembered. Most of us feel that in our make-up there are flaws. They occur with regard to antecedents, to family, to education, to sophistication, to lack of professional experience, to lack of the habit of the world, or to any of the circumstances that enter into human life. Our first prompting is to cover the deficiency with an ornamental patch. Second thoughts show us that just as we stand, flaws, deficiencies, and all, the world will see us at our best. Human nature has always that rough standard of justice, a love for the genuine. No man has everything in his favour; but he who simply and sanely stands forth as he is, is the one who will score.

At the same time it must be repeated that between affectation and self-correction the distinction must be kept clear, and each one must do it for himself. It is not difficult when you give your mind to it. Self-correction must go on incessantly. Affectation must be spurned from its first sug-

gestion of itself, as an infant will spurn anything but milk.

I happen to know the story of a woman which may be a case in point. In a small Canadian town she had married a wandering Englishman, who settled down in her native place and became a townsman of repute. In middle life he inherited an earldom. A great historic title, it brought with it a great historic position, and one of the most famous seats in England. In much trepidation the simply bred Canadian woman, now no longer young, went to take up duties for which she had had no training and possessed no taste. But such was her naturalness, her sincerity, and her lack of affectation that she found friends where she might have looked for critics, and in one of the most complex and exacting societies in the world soon became beloved.

The memory illustrates the fact that charm is first of all the charm of the genuine. Where we get that nothing tells against it. When in humility and simplicity we are the selves God made us we are sure to win.

2. But, as we must be ourselves without affectation, we must be ourselves without aggressiveness. The art of not pushing forward is some-

thing which simplicity must study. It is remarkable how easily people find out our good points when we say nothing about them. Nowhere do our higher qualities develop so quickly as in the background. Be yourself but don't talk about yourself. Be yourself but don't think about yourself any more than for self-direction and self-correction. When you must reply to questions about yourself, do it with sincerity and yet as not taking yourself too seriously. Though these are maxims of the copybook order they are not so familiar as to have become platitudes. As a matter of fact, we never need tact to a more exquisite degree than precisely in the handling of our personal rights and claims.

This is a subject that is difficult to speak about through fear of encouraging that impulsive trampling on the claims of others which for years has masqueraded as the right to be one's self. No one inherits the right to be himself by force. All relationships in so complex a world as this are matters of adaptation. Few can swing absolutely free, and those who can do so recognize the very freedom as another, and often a harder, limitation. The genuine self shrinks from violence, from shirking duties, from inflicting

pain. It is the false self that cuts the painter and drifts clear when there are reasons for standing by. Nothing is gained in the end by this kind of desertion of a post. On the contrary, more has been lost by overriding the claims of others in order that the individual shall take his own way than any mind but an all-seeing one could reckon up. We are already involved with others when we come into the world, and for obvious reasons it is well that we should be. We cannot turn our backs on that connection just because we think we have had enough of it. It may grow irksome, it may involve sacrifice on our part, we may wish we could be rid of it, but so long as the claim remains so long remains the necessity on our parts to meet it. Meeting it fully and courageously we shall find the inner self expanded, not damaged or repressed.

This is especially true of all those duties that rise in connection with our relatives. It was an astonishing bit of insight which came to an ancient poet when, after speaking of God as the father of orphans and the defender of widows, he adds that, "He setteth the solitary in families." What would the human race do without these little centres, these tiny clans, these focus-

sing points for love, faith, loyalty, as well as for qualities more commonplace? In a healthy-minded family there are squabbles, scraps, and dissensions, but there are also affections, sympathies, fidelities, and all sorts of playing up to the highest point of honour when it comes to a time of need. The family is our first, and by far our most important, school. More than anything else that ever comes into our lives, what we pick up there determines what we shall make of our characters. As I write I have been reading in the English papers these noble words from Colonel Edward E. Spafford, National Commander of the American Legion, in his telegram of sympathy on the death of Earl Haig:

"One word expresses Earl Haig's life—character. In the darkest hour his iron courage never failed, and always he showed courtesy, unselfishness, patience, and serenity. He exemplified the tenacious courage of the British to hold on in the face of all adversity, and it is due to his high military talents that the vision of victory which he had in the dark hours finally became a reality."

This is a stirring impression of himself for any man to leave behind him, and if he revealed these

qualities, as undoubtedly he did, we may be certain that he learned them first at home. So it must be with the majority of those who later become great. The seeds of greatness are latent not so much in a man as in a family. It is in the family and with it, whatever its drawbacks and wearisome demands, that we develop them most easily. True there, we shall be true anywhere.

This is not a digression from my point that the first stage in simplicity is in being one's genuine self, it is an integral part of it. The family is one's self; one's self is created by the family. The subject is in fact so overwhelmingly important that we shall have to return to it by other ways.

V

As ranking next to being one's genuine self in the evolution of simplicity I think I should put frankness. Frankness is a merit to which we pay little attention, perhaps because as nations the English and Americans are not particularly frank. Roughly speaking, for frankness the Englishman is too reserved, the American too cautious. We rarely commend anyone for being frank; we rarely notice whether he is or not. If

he is, we are as likely as not to take it as an oddity rather than as a virtue.

And yet frankness is not only a great charm, but a great relief to the individual who, as a rule, has in so many ways to repress himself. It gives him that right to outspokenness which we almost deny nowadays except as a privilege of the press. In fact, we tend to regard outspokenness with suspicion. It might hurt people's feelings. It might rouse differences of opinion. It might shock. It might offend. It might subject the speaker to being misinterpreted. Better to keep conversation down to the milk-and-watery modicum to which there is no objection. This may be taken as the standard which we regard as both practical and polite, so that for frankness as a quality we have little or no use.

Possibly there are racial reasons why we do not understand it. To no other attribute do we still apply the name of the people who first brought it to our notice. Many other good things we inherited from the mixture of races from whom we spring, some from one, some from another, till all have become native. Frankness we borrowed from the Franks, whose blood enters into us but slightly. It was the peculiar stamp

which freedom left upon them. We saw it; we liked it; we copied it to some extent; but we have always been afraid of it. When we see it to-day as naturally practised by the French, to whom it does belong by inheritance, we are amazed rather than admiring.

For the French are frank in a way that we are not. The liberty of speaking out and saying what they think is universally accorded them. It is assumed that each grown man has opinions of his own and naturally wishes to express them. This he is allowed to do with no supersensitive blockade to suffer from his utterances. The Frenchman's freedom to be personal would among ourselves often be taken as insulting. He criticizes, judges, condemns, and is greeted by no opposition more envenomed than a laugh or a shrug of a shoulder. Even when protest is aroused it is expressed with the same vigour with which he speaks himself, but also the same good humour. Quarrels take place now and then, of course; the Affaire Dreyfus, for example, broke up households and communities; but I am speaking of the average give-and-take of life. The talk round a French table is animated, ardent, sincere, to a degree which it rarely is

with us, because each one says what he thinks. I have heard a man tell a woman that she was looking her plainest that night because she had done her hair badly, and a woman tell a man that he had made a bad impression on her friends because he had spoken with a sniffle. After this exchange each pursued the conversation blandly, as though neither had thrown into the camp of the other what we should regard as a small bomb-shell. All of us have at times been amused by the way in which the guests at a French dinner will discuss the food, no one hesitating to tell the host and hostess exactly how he finds it. These are points as to which they are not sensitive, no such sensitiveness being encouraged by their point of view. If a man doesn't like the way in which a woman does her hair he is at liberty to say so, if he knows her well enough, but she is not at liberty to resent it. If a woman considers that a man has a poor social manner, she, on her side, is at liberty to tell him so, if she knows him well enough, with the same immunity on her part. This frankness runs through all their ways of life, with a wider swing to each personality than anything that social convention permits among ourselves.

For frankness has a double action. It enables the speaker to be freely himself; it makes the listener tolerant. Not the least of its blessings is this last. Among the French anything may be talked over with good temper. I have heard warm discussions between Republicans, Royalists, and Imperialists carried on with wit and friendliness, while between Protestants and Catholics the talk ran as easily as the for-and-against of a new novel. "I hammered the Protestants—*j'ai tapé sur les Protestants,*" said the great Dominican preacher, Père Janvier, to me, in describing his Lenten course at Nôtre Dame, while we both laughed cordially. If you can talk so simply of religion you can do so on any other topic in the world.

VI

But this is French frankness. Our frankness, when we have it, is different. It is much more timid, much more circumspect, in the true sense of circumspection which is keeping a lookout all round one. This we must do because of our national sentiment against hurting other people's feelings. I sometimes wonder if we do not give other people's feelings too much consideration.

It is easily possible to do so. Overconscientiousness will often turn the gracious instincts of courtesy into morbid fears. The natural desire not to give offence may become so nearly an obsession that we scarcely dare to express ourselves at all. This is the case with more people than we are likely to suppose. When they are in any kind of social life their aim is to say nothing but what will be approved of. If, having expressed themselves, they find that others disagree with them, they back down feebly. Trained to put other people's sentiments before their own, they lack the sense of natural authority, of ordinary human rights. That exactly what they think, and as they think it, is the worthiest contribution they can make to a mental or social sum total is an idea that would probably astonish them.

This is partly due, of course, to the fact that as a people we have grown intolerant of individual opinion. Group thinking is about the smallest subdivision we will stand. From the man unwilling to have his thinking done by someone else, as the selection of his books is made for him, we have a kind of shrinking. He claims a right we do not readily concede. The function

of the American mind is not to think but to agree. To agree, then, being the chief end of man, it is also the most important use to which we put our speech. That the first duty of each man and each woman is to stand out and be a character and not to sink unrecognized and unrecognizable into the seething mass would to most of us, I think, be revolutionary. Individuality being something to suppress, we suppress it first of all in our opinions. Many of us come to a time when frankness would be no privilege because we no longer have anything to be frank about. Thinking exactly like everybody else, we have nothing to say that everybody else would not say too.

We can see the beginning of this process in the way the talking of children is suppressed. Children are naturally talkative and naturally frank. That some guidance and control must be given them goes without saying. But in all our standardized homes they are hushed up here and silenced there till at last they are afraid to say anything. So many taboos are established all round them that they don't know what to say. They will talk to other boys and girls more frankly than may be desirable, but in the family they shut up.

Few of us realize the humiliation the child mind undergoes when the bud of its expanding spirit is nipped too unthinkingly. A laugh, a look, a careless reprimand, is enough to strike it dumb forever with regard to the quarter from which the wound proceeds. To be in the movement it will find trivial things to say, but in the matter of its confidence it will never open up again. Because we do not understand the sacred rights of frankness we parents slam between our children and ourselves doors which will never be unlocked by any key of ours. Others may do it with other keys, but we have lost our chance. For all the rest of life, between father and son, between mother and daughter, there will be silence on the things that most need to be talked about.

And then when frankness forces itself, as it will and must, it is oftener than not at the wrong time and to the wrong people. We have recently been passing through a period when frankness between young men and young women has been spoken of as "appalling." Whether it is so or not I have no power of judging, but I do not hesitate to say that young people who have always had the privilege of frankness at home

are much less likely to be indiscreet outside. I do know children who, in proportion as they grew to it, have talked about what their elders talked about and had matters explained to them simply as they went along. For them frankness has never been appalling, because it has never been anything but frankness. There has been no mystery, no novelty, no outrageous daring to act as an incentive to be shocking. It is astonishing how commonplace the most piquant themes become once there is no longer a taboo.

VII

It is a pity we cannot define frankness, but it is a quality which differs so much with individuals that a definition is impossible. The nearest I can come to expressing what it means to me is to associate it with something else which is not frankness at all. It is not frankness at all, and yet the connection is so close that it suggests the light and the lamp. If frankness were the lamp, then the light would be candour.

Candour is one of the loveliest words in our language because it is one of the loveliest attributes to character. It is one of the words that make a picture on the mind. It is not often that

words do that, especially names of abstracts. This is perhaps due, unconsciously on our parts, to the way in which we get it. Derivatively candour is something to see. It is whiteness. When a Roman of the Old World was a candidate for office he dressed in white, as a token that he was *candidus,* white, throughout. So the concept passed from the outer to the inner character, till to-day we still *see* candour as if with the organs of vision almost before we conceive of it in the mind. Candour creates a portrait, a being who registers openness, truth, sincerity. You might say that with candour in the heart frankness must as a matter of course be its expression.

Candour, then, I take to be another element in humility, and it is first of all in one's self. It is a way of thinking, a habit of mind. You cannot be white outside unless you are white within. Something must shine through. When in the Seventeenth Century porcelain was first brought to the Western world, its special beauty was at once perceived in its being not only white throughout, but translucently white. There is such a thing as white earthenware—a kind much appreciated by connoisseurs was for many years made at Bennington, Vermont—white through-

out, but opaque. Porcelain, not earthenware, presents the parallel with candour. Candour must transmit the light, but a light that can only come from within.

It is truth with one's inner self that gives candour its shining quality. But again I doubt if it could be defined, or if any rule could be laid down for acquiring it. That it can be acquired there is no question, but the method of acquiring it must be discovered by each man for himself. It is easy to say that that method consists simply in being, to the limit of one's power, white within; but this is no more than getting the prescription written down. The test comes in having it put up and in taking the medicine. Of this process, in such complex lives as we lead in the Twentieth Century, the individual alone can be the judge. And yet, to the limit of one's power, to be white within is about all that we can say. If we try we shall get results. You cannot do your best to be honest with yourself and not be more or less translucent.

For this reason candour is perhaps that trait by which quick judges of character most readily make their summing up. This summing up may be unconscious on their parts, and yet it can take

place. Put two men before them, one translucent and one opaque, and the choice will go to the translucent. Candour perhaps is the spectrum in which all the other qualities can be broken as component rays.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER AND GRACE

I

AFTER humility I should rank as foundational to character the marvellous power of meekness. Meekness, I should define, inadequately and briefly, as the force which bears. It is the strongest development yet put forth by human nature; in its way it is the most tenacious of man's gifts.

Among the ancient Hebrews Moses was reckoned as their meekest man because he was their most heroic. It belonged to the deep spiritual insight which has enabled them to be to the human race what they have since become that they could see him in this light. Because he was meek he was strong; because he was strong he was meek. He bore everything, from the insolence of individuals to the breaking of his own exalted heart. Haughty, princely, generous, impulsive, hot-tempered, wise with a wisdom un-

known among his people before his time, with a physical vigour such as few men have ever been possessed of, he renounced his ambitions, he subdued his passions, he brought down his pride, to be a leader of a band of slaves who followed him unwillingly and often treated him with insult. Merely to make himself one with this rabble and put up with its treasons was an achievement to which he alone of his time would probably have been equal. Never was such a prayer put up for any people as he makes for his:

"Oh, this people have committed a great sin and made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin! . . . but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book."

Could the force to bear go farther?

More vividly than anything else I can say this will show what I mean by meekness—the power of endurance.

As a fundamental to character it comes close to humility because it is based on the ground. Without it we lack something primally resistant. When I was a boy there was a word colloquially current to indicate an element in character which nowadays has almost passed out of use, possibly

because we no longer have the thing. The word was *grit*. A man had grit, or he hadn't grit. Grit is a word of quite honourable origin and means the harder, stonier quality in sand. When you had it you stood like a rock. Blows could not down you. You bore them, but you stood upright. You bore them again and again. Broken by age and infirmities you might become, but you passed outward on your own two feet, as it were, as Moses went up Nebo.

Grit is the phase of character which, it seems to me, best illustrates meekness.

For one thing, meekness is conscious of its strength. I do not say that it is never appalled by what it must confront; it must be appalled very often; but the fiercer the test the more surely it knows that it will have the power to meet it. It rises to an emergency as no other quality within us. It enters into courage and makes it more dynamic. It enters into love and toughens it. On energy it acts as those methods of blowing which turn iron into steel. Almost we can paraphrase St. Paul and say:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels . . . and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mystery and all

knowledge; and though I have all the faith so that I could remove mountains . . . and though I bestow all my good to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not meekness, the capacity to bear, it profiteth me nothing."

It is part of our strange lack of understanding in the very rudiments of character that we so generally rate meekness as synonymous with weakness. True, we cannot always discern between the weak and the strong, and many whom we consider feeble are, as compared with ourselves, spiritual giants. But I speak of our ordinary estimate. While meekness is emphasized by both the Old and New Testaments, I cannot but think it neglected by the Church. If we ever hear it mentioned in a sermon it is probably as a white-livered submission which a man of spirit would be ashamed to act upon. Quite otherwise was it regarded by those who used to set it forth as an ornament to character. By them it was spoken of as an extraordinary power. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," is a case in point; but a thousand years before that utterance the same thing had been said by a poet—the translation is from the Great Bible of King

Henry VIII, still in use for the psalter of the Book of Common Prayer—"The meek-spirited shall possess the earth, and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace." Why should the meek-spirited possess the earth? Because of their tenacity. What we mean by possessing the earth is presumably the conquest of earthly conditions. Naturally that goes to him who can endure. In our modern American slang, which is often as exact as the strictest instrument of precision, we call that man a "sticker." Well, the "sticker" is an instance of meekness. During the war we often spoke of the Englishman's bulldog ability to hang on; and there was another example of meekness. The "sticker" and the bulldog may both lose through other incapacities, but as far as their tenacity will carry them the rule of the earth is theirs.

Not only shall they inherit the earth, but they shall be "refreshed in the multitude of peace." What a noble expression!—equal in beauty to Æschylus's "countless laughter of the waves." "Refreshed in the multitude of peace!" Peace has many aspects, and meekness shall inherit more than one of them. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with

salvation." Strength and beauty are essentials to meekness, and meekness is essential to peace.

For in meekness there is always the suggestion of gentleness. It is conceivable that a mere capacity for "sticking" might be rough. Meekness couldn't be. There are in it too many implications of softness and tenderness. It is strength in sweetness, in sympathy, in courtesy. We have spoken just now of Lord Haig, whose picture, owing to his sudden death, has recently been in all the papers. In writing I see before me his face as uniting all the traits I have been trying to bring together and express by a single word. It is a strong face and yet a gentle one, dogged and yet kindly, courageous, courteous, wise, loyal, and with something in it beyond words, all at the same time. This and more I understand as meekness, the power that gives us the inheritance of the earth through the force of natural domination.

II

As an extension of meekness I should put patience. Patience is the ability to wait. True, in its origin, it also contains the idea of suffering, but waiting, with suffering or without it, is the sense now most inherently connected with the word.

We suffer patiently, we wait patiently, as part of the one expectation. It is the expectation which is the essence of the patience.

Meekness is meekness by its simple capacity to endure. Patience must endure to an end. It is thus that the one slips into the other by natural gradation. Meekness is heroic; patience turns heroism to practical account. It gives it something to be heroic *for*.

That something is a purpose, though we cannot often say exactly what the purpose is. Life on the whole seems inchoate. Even history, with the long perspective we can get on it, is difficult to analyze more than in general. In general we can see it as a long slow urge into a slow broken surge of which the trend in the main is upward. New efforts and new empires form and die. For this we often see the reasons when the purpose is obscure. So in our personal lives. We can see the reason for this or for that, while the meaning of the whole eludes us.

This is so partly because of the multiplicity of detail. Every waking second has details of its own. Every waking second has fifty or a hundred or a thousand details all working in us and with us and for us and against us, with a complexity of

operation that we can no more follow than we can the movements of the bacilli in the air. It takes all our strength and attention to deal with such of these details as reach us. Not only do they occupy and preoccupy our minds, but they block our outlooks. We have so much to do in living through an hour that we fail to see what the hour was about and why it was granted us. So it is with days, with months, with years. Laden with happenings they rush by us, faster and ever faster, tearing from our lips the eternal *Why?* and never vouchsafing us an answer. Why were we born? Why do we study? Why do we work? Why do we marry? Why do we beget children? Why do we grow old, break up, and die, watching our children as they do the same thing after us? What is the purpose of it all? or is there a purpose? or does it end in nothing?

And there is Patience with her eternal *Wait!*

1. Time is God's arrangement for keeping the events of the eternal *Now* from crowding on us faster than we are competent to handle them. Patience begins her work as we face the fact that those events are paid out to us and come in no other way. Any other way would be too much for us to swing. Though varied here and there by

some great happening we get most of life in little things. There is value in routine. Monotonous as we often find it, it is the very monotony which gives us a real grasp on it. Mastery springs from repetition, and repetition without routine is impossible. We get up each morning to the well-worn round of dressing, breakfast, work, and dreary it often seems. But take us away from it for a month or two and we are generally glad to go back to it again. Why? Because we can manage it; because its duties are within our powers. Even the largest work, that of rulers of countries, of great statesmen, inventors and discoverers, of great artists, writers, teachers, soldiers, priests, is done by adding precept to precept and line to line, in seemingly endless repetition. For the vast majority of us during the vastly major portion of our lives there is no relief from this; and those of us who force relief by swinging free before life frees us by shifting us to some new phase only do ourselves harm.

To take each minute and each detail as it is passed out to us and make it as perfect as we can is the first lesson patience has to teach us. If the main purpose of existence is still too large and far away for us to apprehend it, that minor pur-

pose is as clear as anything we need. That we might fulfil it Time was measured to us by the sun and moon—the busy days—the merciful nights—the rage for doing—the longing for rest—all adapted to a race of beings who find it hard to keep awake for twenty-four hours at a stretch. Were the purpose of our existence revealed to us as a whole it would probably overwhelm us. As it is, we have it fed to us a little at a time, in atomic fragments, as we feed it to our children, with the loving counsel, Do this, Do that, then—Wait and See.

2. Patience with routine I see as allied to patience with restriction. No matter what the scale of life, restrictions hedge it round. They hedge round wealth and poverty alike. It is strange, when you come to think of it, how few of us are ever free to do exactly what we choose, and most of those who are will tell you that such freedom is nothing to be desired. No restrictions means no duties. To have no duties toward anyone else means that no one has a duty toward you. "He setteth the solitary in families"; but occasionally we meet someone from whom the family has dropped away. For loneliness like that freedom

is no compensation. Better the tie, the claim, the chain! Better no liberty at all than too much of it!

But for most of us this is not a situation to consider. With us patience must have its work the other way. It must show us the beauty there is in being bound. Since bound we are, there must be a reason for the bondage. Where we see a reason we can generally submit, adapting ourselves to whatever duty calls.

3. And the first call of duty is generally from that family on which I lay so much stress. There is more in the saying, Charity begins at home, than we are inclined to think. Everything begins at home, and most things which begin there remain lifelong. When the solitary are set in families, those who have shared a common shelter move henceforth like a little tribe. Life will separate them, of course; intimacies will survive between some which die out among others; but something indelible continues, and to this it seems to me important to give a measure of consecration. Mutual affection, mutual aid, mutual interdependence, these strike me as conditions we do not outlive, wherever there are parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives.

At the same time there is no denying that precisely from such relationships the most irksome duties come. By settling the solitary in families we set them in circles of restriction which ring them round and round. Of what they are called on to renounce and endure it is useless to give illustrations, because every reader can supply them from his own experience. There are demands of the old upon the young, demands of the young upon the old, demands of the strong upon the weak, demands of the weak upon the strong, demands of the thriftless upon the careful, demands of the intemperate upon the sober, till sometimes we wonder as to the quarter from which the next importunity will come. All this is the merest commonplace of life, and almost no one is exempt from it.

With such cases as these our sympathy is spontaneous, and all that keeps us from aiding and abetting the refusal of this kind of claim is the instinctive wisdom whispered into our hearts by patience. Patience tells us that for faithfulness like this there is somewhere a special benediction. As a matter of fact we are so informed in that one commandment in which our home duties are summed up, to honour our father and our mother.

It will be noticed here that this law of Moses, so to call it, heads the second of the classic division of the ten into two, the one giving what is called our duty toward God, and the other our duty toward man. Well, then, our duty toward man begins in the home. Honour thy father and thy mother. Start with that, and all other duties—to brothers and sisters, to husbands, wives, children, and the outside world—will fall into place. Moreover, of all the ten it is the only one to which a promise is attached.

Among these ancient nomads, homeless ever since Abraham migrated from Ur of the Chaldees that they might have a country of their own and be able to live long in it, was the highest earthly blessing the mind could conceive of. It was a primitive form of what afterward became "The meek-spirited shall possess the earth." The man who was true to his father and mother and the rest of his little circle would never be left in the lurch by the Father-Over-All. That could be laid down as an axiom. It can be laid down as an axiom still. Honour thy father and thy mother, be true to your home and your relations, and do it without fear, and it will be to you treasure laid up in heaven. On that treasure the interest will be

liberal, and to receive it you will not have to wait till after death. There are many things of which we must doubt, but of that one we may be sure.

So when we see a daughter tied to the bedside of an aged mother, or a mother toiling to support a stricken son, or parents doing their utmost for ungrateful children, or any of those combinations which appeal to us so strongly because perhaps the conditions are so similar to our own, don't let us waste too much of our pity. A great chance is being given them. The meek-spirited shall possess the earth.

4. But something must be remembered by those of us who are taking these burdens on ourselves. We must do it willingly. This does not necessarily mean that if we had the choice of all tasks it is the one we would choose most eagerly. But it does mean that, since the task has to be undertaken by someone, and since there seem to be reasons why that someone should be you or me, we accept the responsibility. We accept it as nearly as may be with cheerfulness. We accept it without making the recipient feel that we are doing what we shouldn't do if there were anyone else on earth to whom we could pass the buck. It means that we do it with decency, with dignity,

and with outward signs, at least, of kindliness and goodwill.

From this it follows that we do not encourage ourselves in secret and impotent rebellion. Of all ways of doing ourselves harm that is the most wasteful and gratuitous. No good comes of it whatever, not even relief to our feelings. Such fancied relief as we get is only the drunkard's relief in more drink. I think it is acknowledged by psychologists and psychotherapists that violent emotions, such as anger and inner rage, inject into the system poisons which cannot be eliminated before they have done deadly work. If we make up our minds that we must stand by, then for our own sakes let us do it with the least inner turmoil possible.

Of this an illustration occurs to me as I write. A daughter had confided to me the strain of her existence in earning a livelihood and at the same time taking care of an aged and invalid mother. On the same day the mother confessed to me her eagerness to "go home," only that she knew she must stay as long as possible because her daughter had nothing else to live for. This situation was not ironic; it was sweet. It meant that in spite of all her weariness the daughter had contrived to

surround her mother with the happiness and love which made her feel herself still wanted. Of all the humiliations that come to old age the bitterest is to find that nobody wants one any longer. So many, so many, have to come to it, rich and poor alike, and especially, it seems to me, old women. They have known youth, beauty, love, wifehood, motherhood, honour, and yet they will lie for years with the knowledge in their hearts that everyone about them wishes they were gone. Surely if we can ever spare them a pang of that hard consciousness it is worth the attempt.

Here another illustration comes to me. I have just been reading a novel sent to me by an English friend, of which the scene is laid in India and Tibet. It is by Talbot Mundy, and is called *Om*. The story is mysterious and the setting strange, but strewn all over its surface, like diamonds in sand, are extraordinary bits of wisdom. Here is one. The hero had spoken of someone's making a great sacrifice.

"But the Lama interrupted with a gesture of the hand, 'My son, there is no such thing as sacrifice, except in the imagination. There is opportunity to serve, and he who overlooks it robs himself.'"

This is a fine thought, one which does not often suggest itself to us, to whom sacrifice is generally painted as duty *in excelsis*. Opportunity to serve is a higher presentation. There are many, too, to whom it would be a more comforting presentation, taking from sacrifice its wormwood taste. He who overlooks this opportunity to serve robs himself.

5. At the same time I think that those who are so served should cultivate the grace of taking the service lovingly. The Art of Becoming a Burden might perhaps be taught very usefully in churches. It is a lot that threatens every one of us. Money cannot always save us from it, nor any foresight we can bring to bear. For that enormous multitude who have no money it is a possibility from which we can be rescued only by a timely death. Seeing it approach we take it grimly, ungraciously, openly declaring that there is no fate to which we would not submit in preference. To lose our independence! To become an adjunct to another person's household, even a son's or a daughter's, after having had our own! To be taken on sufferance because there is nothing else to be done with us! These are bitter thoughts, and in general we take them bitterly.

This does not ease the situation either for others or for ourselves.

III

Graciousness is perhaps a quality of which we do not make enough. It is not grace; it is an emanation of grace. The idea that Grace, the highest and most ineffable beauty, was God's special gift to men is possibly the most marvellous discovery concerning him made by the Hebrew race. No other race ever revealed anything which at all resembles it. No wonder that early Christian instinct, with its expanding sense of a universe of love, should have seized on it at once, making it one of the two or three watchwords in the new turning toward God. That it was indefinable was part of its application to a God who transcended definition.

1. While we could not take from this lovely concept all its loveliness we have done to it what we could; we have hardened it. Unintentionally, unconsciously even, we have reduced the cosmic graciousness to a rule of thumb. It was scarcely to be expected that the Græco-Latin Christian, who still dominates Christian thinking, could let the

ineffable alone. If the Sublime Graciousness did bestow grace, then it must be by the Græco-Latin weights and balances. It must be a little at a time, in such small quantities that human hands could dole it out. Our so-called "means of grace," by which a definite amount of the supernal blessedness is awarded in response to an earnest Lent, a fervent novena, or a vigorous revival, reminds us of the modern ways of administering the sunshine by patent lamps or pellets of Vitamin E. Please note that I am saying nothing against any of these methods: they must surely be better than nothing; but it was best, I think, when men saw Grace and Graciousness wherever they saw God and each freely offered them.

2. In the churches I hear very little nowadays of either Graciousness or Grace. Perhaps the words have been outmoded. Perhaps the pill-box method of prescription is being found inadequate, while nothing new suggests itself. In my judgment, which is not infallible, of course, the place in which to look for Grace is not specially at the altar, nor in the confessional, nor at the penitent bench; it is in practically trying to cultivate a beauty which is so obviously that of God.

Among the first things written by St. John the Evangelist about Jesus Christ are these words:

"So the Logos became flesh, and tarried among us; we have seen his glory—glory such as an only son enjoys from his father—seen it to be full of grace and reality. . . . We have all been receiving grace after grace from his fullness. While the Law was given by Moses, grace and reality are ours through Jesus Christ."

This grace, these graces, will not, I take it, be limited to the somewhat wistful and anæmic thing we know as Christian holiness; it will be to our experience what spring is to the year.

3. We are all in our way mirrors in which we reflect God. Some mirrors are blurred; some are broken; and yet, while none is perfect, some do give us a reflection of ideals higher than ourselves. And I have sometimes thought that those who have best shown me personally what the God of Grace may be like have been the six or eight truly gracious men and women I have known.

None the less, if you asked me exactly what their graciousness consisted in I should be at a loss to tell you. It was in a manner, a smile, a courtesy, but neither these words nor any others I could command would be adequate as interpre-

tations. The nearest I can come to it is that it was the outward expression of beauty within; and what that is may be better left to the imagination than subjected to analysis. For my own part I couldn't analyze it even if I tried. All I can say is that some people have it, and when they have, everything else about them sinks into insignificance. I know, for example, a man whose approach to you is gruff, while his speech is like a dog barking; but his smile is heavenly, and the minute you are in intimate talk with him you know that his nature is beautiful. This is something of what I mean by beauty within, the action of grace in expressing love and making ourselves lovable.

4. And so we come back to the poor old woman who finds herself a burden on other people's hands. Now there are ways of lightening this burden as well as of making it as heavy as it generally is. These ways are largely in the hands of the burden herself. There is a graciousness of taking as well as a graciousness of giving. Pleasure in giving is easily enhanced by a pleasure in receiving. There are those to whom it becomes a satisfaction to give because they naturally manifest gratitude. It should not be forgotten that

gratitude is a form of graciousness, and that it consists in more than saying, Thank you! Saying, Thank you! is much, but after all it may be only a formality. Gratitude must be *manifested*. Manifest is a subtle word, and means so to display what one feels that it becomes clear to another's understanding without explanatory words. Gratitude may or may not be uttered, but assuredly it must be shown. It is best shown in grace and graciousness. When the thing given as a duty is taken as a joy the duty becomes transfigured.

I recall a woman whom I knew in my youth whose beauty, charm, and indiscretion had become legendary up and down our countryside. Well, the time arrived when, old, penniless, and helpless, she came on the hands of a son-in-law who didn't approve of her, and of a severe and tight-lipped daughter. Husband, lovers, beauty, means were all now in the past, and the only refuge was one which would not have opened could it have stayed shut. But one thing she hadn't lost, and that was graciousness. Into a grim household she brought the light of sweetness. Charmed by everything done for her, she soon charmed those who were doing it. Son-in-law, daughter,

and grandchildren all came to delight in her, and when she died—contrary to all the rules of poetic justice, considering her career—she went down lamented into an honoured grave.

5. But here I must point out that this sweetness did not begin when a woman old and wrecked crept into the shelter of her daughter's house. It had been lifelong. Though not a model in certain respects, in certain others she had kept the beauty within. Rather perhaps she had *manifested* the beauty within till such manifestation had become habitual. It was probably the case that she couldn't do anything else, and that she conquered because she couldn't. And there is always this to say about ourselves, that it is never too late to begin. We sometimes say about another, "It's too late to change him now," but we can never say that of ourselves. With ourselves we are always in time. If during the whole of my first eighty years I have been crabbed and complaining, I can begin to be sweet-tempered in my eighty-first. True, it will not be as easy as if I had begun earlier, but something can be done. Graciousness has no age, or if it has it is lovelier as it grows older. It is at least one charm which is more charming with the years.

The chief point is that the beauty within still remains in all of us, though we may have kept it smothered there. "We have seen his glory . . . seen it to be full of grace and reality." Something of the kind, I believe, the right kind of eyes would discover in every one of us, hidden, blocked, fulfilling its function barely, if at all, and yet like buried gold, indestructible and always there. It is part of our reality. We are never too old to bring it out to view. Should, then, these words ever suggest to any unhappy and ungracious person the thought of trying to be gracious and perhaps a little happier, I beg that the question of age may not be permitted to kill so good a prompting. The beauty within is ageless and undying. It can be shown by a look in the eyes, a shade in the voice, a smile, a pressure of the hand. "We have seen his glory . . . full of grace and reality."

6. Nevertheless, I should like to emphasize the necessity, when it comes to graciousness and gratitude, of beginning young. If I had again a child to bring up, I should try never to let him lose sight of the immense amount that is done for him not only by his parents but by the organized life around him. When you come to think of

it the underlying motive of organized life is always graciousness. The social fabric exists to give help and shelter to the humblest individual, the weakest child. That it misses here and miscarries there is nothing to the point. Graciousness after graciousness is what we have all been getting from its fullness ever since we were born. In season and out of season I should try to impress this on the mind of a child till he positively grows up into the knowledge of how much he is beholden to the vast goodwill around him. This, I think, would bring out his own goodwill and sense of responsibility. Graciousness begets graciousness as surely as a smile begets a smile. At no time will it do it more certainly than in childhood, when the reality, the beauty within, is still visible and enchanting.

IV

If in reviewing what we lack we would begin at the beginning it must be among these groundwork qualities. Only by some mastery of these can we possess the material on which to go on and build. I am far from saying that everyone must be an expert in them before he can construct a reliant self; I am only affirming that for every-

thing meant to stand upright a foundation must be laid.

Fortunately it is laid already. We come into the world with it. If we did not we could never start out as little citizens to school. Our first task is in not losing sight of it; our second in finding it again after it has been lost. Here again we must remember that it is never lost as an article is lost in the streets; it is only obscured. Obscured, it can come to light again. It is like the pavement of a Greek or Roman villa which may lie for centuries under six feet of earth till a peasant's spade touches it accidentally. Once a corner is disclosed patience can unearth the whole of the beautiful design.

Something like that it is with our characters. Accident will often reveal what time and life have covered up. But work will show the rest—as full of reality and grace.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTER AND WORK

I

THE next group of qualities to engage our attentions are, I should say, those which concern our economic life. By our economic life I mean no more than the necessity of earning a living. This subject is so vital that I can never understand how we let it go with such casual consideration. In the average family of children it is mentioned now and then but is left in the main to take care of itself. Almost any man of mature years will tell you that he did not walk into his career, and still less was he guided; he stumbled, he tumbled, and only arrived because he was lucky enough to find his feet, and see where he was going. That we must form our characters to work, and that work must form our characters, is something which neither home, nor school, nor college, nor church, puts before us otherwise than rarely.

II

It is a curious fact that the more civilized man has become the harder he has made it for himself to live. This has been the case wherever a civilization has emerged. Among primitive peoples lots are not only fairly equal but fairly easy. If one abounds, all abound; if one starves, all starve. To this there may be exceptions; but the statement is true in general. Only in civilizations do we see the spectacle of many going hungry while a few are living in abundance. It takes character to deal with this problem, and dealing with it develops character.

The United States, as I write, is credited with being so prosperous as to make the rest of the world envious. Not only has it more gold than any other country, but possibly more than all the other countries put together. The stock market never ran so high, and new records are reported every second day. At the same time unemployment is becoming so widespread that the churches, welfare societies, labour unions, and newspapers are all discussing it.

It is useless to look to the various revolutionary movements to solve our ills, because, if for no

other reason, we are not yet ready to put their principles into operation. The early Christians quickly found out that for a system of having all things in common, even on a scale so small as theirs, the time was not ripe. It is not ripe yet, after two thousand years. We move; but we cannot move faster than we have the strength to go. Here I am tempted again to quote something from the Lama in Talbot Mundy's *Om*. "You have heard of Gandhi. That is a man of singleness and merit, seeking, as it were, to hasten the procession of the equinox." Hasten the procession of the equinox! It is strange how many of us are trying to do just that. Because *we* wish a thing to be done it must be done whether the time has come for it or not. We have not learned the ground lesson of patience: *Wait!* We don't know how to wait. Whether our civilization has reached a certain point or not we must act as if it had. We forget that the equinox will only come in its own good time and that when it does come nothing will keep it back.

We forget, too, that the equinox comes gently, minute by minute, day by day. Astonishing as it would be in January or July, in March and September it is a matter of course. We reach our

goals not by violent upheavals but by an infinitude of gradations. That which the world is not sufficiently prepared for we may lawfully be afraid of. To take the world as we find it may be merely the prompting of indolence; on the other hand, it may be sanctified good sense.

This is nowhere more true than with the individual's task of earning a living. It is with the world as it is that he must deal, not with the world as he would like to see it after some movement, for which much may be said, has made it over. His question is: How can I best suit myself to the very imperfect society which is all I find at present? I am confronted with these important duties: In an economic life all at sixes and sevens, I must support myself; I must support those dependent on me; I must contribute something to the society around me if I am to be a good citizen. What kind of character do I need for this, and how can it be acquired?

III

How it can be acquired I shall have to leave to the individual; but I think I know at least one or two of the secrets by which the meek get possession of the earth.

1. First, there is the Fighting Spirit. The meek are always fighters. They go at life with the impulse of attack. There is so much to be conquered, so much to be won. Life offers no place to the listless, the apathetic. Its crowns are for victors, not for the born-tired and half-hearted. The worker must bring to his work some of the fire and temper the fighter brings to his.

As a matter of fact, this very idea is implied in the word *job*. Of all the words in the language this perhaps is the one which our modern lips have come to toss about most frequently. It is an interesting word, of Erse or Gaelic extraction, and ordinarily meant a blow. It is therefore a high-spirited, combatant word, of which we still catch an echo in the kindred monosyllable *jab*. From earliest times man's first occupation was a job. He had to go out and kill something—a man, a deer, a bird—but in one way or another his first duty was to deliver a telling blow. He must strike, though he scarcely knew why. True, he slew an enemy, or he helped to supply the larder for the clan, but that was not the full explanation. The full explanation would include the release of energies which must exercise or do worse. If a blow, a job, was the outcome, it was chiefly be-

cause there was only that to do. Even among ourselves entertainment often seems limited, and with primitive man it was more so. Small wonder then that the daily job was just a daily bit of slaughter.

But the real honour of the blow lay in the fact that it was the exhibition of a man's strength. The killing was incidental; the strength came first. Something analogous we find in the French use of the word *coup,* which may mean anything from a blow of the fist that would strike a man dead to a neighbourly hand's turn. The job was an ardent, hot-tempered thing, at which men went with a vim. Its first essential was energy. You could never, as our current slang so accurately puts it, lie down on it. The man who lay down on it would undoubtedly have been slain by his own comrades. So long as the job must be done there was only one decent way of doing it. He who couldn't do it that way lost his status as a man.

If in the course of centuries, and under civilizing influences, we have changed the nature of the job, there are two things which we have not changed. We have not changed its daily necessity, nor the spirit in which it must be attacked. It was

a curious instinct in the Gaelic blend in our ancestry which kept current so masculine a word to express the common duty. Our fathers knew that however work might change it could never be anything but a fight. Fighting is done in many ways, that with weapons being the most crude. The fight of the heart and mind, of the physical energies under the control of the spiritual energies, is the bravest and most incessant we put up, though there are no Military Medals and Victoria Crosses to give it recognition.

2. It is probable that the daily necessity of trudging to the job is the most pregnant of the many blessings man has evolved for himself. The relatively few who do not have to work for a living may for the minute be counted out. Those of us who must are so many that we can almost claim to be the only citizens. We are born to an occupation. If none is ready to our hand, we must find one. If we cannot find one, we must make one. Something we must do. If we don't, we ourselves are the sufferers. We confront an empty world, an empty life.

For the weary plodder this is something to reflect upon. The term applies to so many of us who have actually or figuratively to punch the clock

that we are in danger of forgetting to build altars to the Beautiful Necessity. Necessity presents herself not as beautiful, but as hard, grim, and sordid. We should have nothing to do with her if we were not obliged to. We are willing to be whipped to the job, but we will not go in any other way. We are losing the spirit which makes it a job, the spirit of Up-and-at-it. The fighting is out of the blow; the blow itself is but a nerveless lifting and dropping of the hand. We put into it as much as we think we are paid for and no more.

To the fighting spirit which makes a man a man there is nothing more noxious than the pound-of-flesh estimate of services by money. The man who prides himself on doing as much as he is paid for and no more—and like the devil of the Sea of Gadara his name is Legion—does himself enormous spiritual injury. It is not so much that he stints the employer he is working for as that he cripples his own abilities. I am not so foolish as to think that pay is of no importance, but having agreed for so much we can hardly go too far in our efforts to give satisfaction. For one thing, energy breeds energy. It is not as if we impoverished ourselves by drawing on our resources. On the contrary, it is precisely the situation in which

to him that hath shall be given. It is a law of nature that what we use shall be strengthened and increased. What we do not use will diminish till it disappears. In work we meet the paradox that by giving we enrich ourselves. It is not the employer whom we enrich while we remain poor: that fallacy is the curse of narrow reasoning; we enrich ourselves because we enlarge and enliven the inner man. What that will lead to we never know, but it will certainly lead to new outlooks and opportunities. Among the streams of workers who pour each morning into any great city there is here and there someone who accepts the necessity as rich with new openings. That man goes to the job with an eager heart. An eager heart makes an eager eye, and an eager eye an eager countenance. Out of the trains, the trolley cars, the buses they descend endlessly, the great majority dull of heart, dull of will and wish and intention. But an invisible gaze seems to scan them all, missing no single one of them. An invisible hand is raised, with a beckoning finger. And the beckoning finger always selects the eager eye behind which is the eager heart. While the spiritless plod onward to the counter or the desk, one here and there is chosen to go another way.

3. I have said that while the nature of the job had been changed two things about it had not been changed and the second is the spirit of attack. This implies not only eagerness but vigour. It must be vigour, too, the more vigorous because its objects are small. Relatively speaking, it is easy to be heroic over deeds of heroic size; but to be heroic over petty things calls for truly fighting blood. To take your fighting blood into jobs paid at the rate of ten, fifteen, twenty, and fifty dollars a week and keep up the conviction that in what you are doing you are striking a daily blow for someone and something good makes big demands on the character.

For there is a heat behind the delivery of that kind of blow for which I can find no name but in slang. There has always been a slang name for it, as long as I can remember. Years ago it was "ginger"; then it was "stingo"; then it was "punch"; now it is "pep." What it will be a few years hence none of us can tell, but it will be in the line of the ringing, the stinging, and the sharp. It is as if by instinct the man on the job were seeking the right phrase to save him from the paralysis threatened by routine.

We have seen that routine has its advantages in

that through repetition comes perfection; but it also has its dangers. It soothes; it lulls; it puts to sleep. Half of the men and women on jobs are asleep while they appear to be awake. In the word of the moment they lack "pep." They do not lack it by nature, but by virtue of the treadmill round. Monotony has eaten into them. They would rather lie down on the job than go on striking the blow. When the judgment has gone forth on a man that he "has lost his pep," it is a death sentence. I remember a man, once a highly successful writer, telling me that of himself, while the tears of despair ran down his cheeks.

Now it is precisely to react against this tendency to fall asleep at the post that we must keep the fighting spirit keen. Oddly enough it is a habit soon acquired by those who seriously try to pick it up. That is perhaps because it is the more natural of the two states of mind. We become sluggish, but we do it more or less against the grain. Activity being that to which we were born, it responds readily to our call to it. Now and then we see men and women who strike us as dynamos of energy. So they are, but they didn't become so all at once. They used their vitality; they kept on using it. What was at first only sec-

ond nature became first, till force was at their command.

Some are active by nature; some are kept so by their work; but the rank and file of us very easily become dispirited. We lose our hopes, our ambitions, our self-confidence, settling down to the meagre way of life which we can compass easily. These are the men who make factory fodder, shop fodder, business fodder, to whom are flung the jobs that anyone can do, at a wage which makes them blush. And yet they sink to it. They sink to it and suffer, because they lie beneath the black cloud of fatality. Circumstance has made things so, and they feel themselves without a remedy.

It is to guard against this that, it seems to me, it is so necessary to go at life in the spirit of attack. Life is one thing when I spring at my job and another when I drag myself to it tired in advance. My character changes merely with the mental attitude; and when my character changes it changes my lot. Character is Fate.

For instance, we all know people who curse their luck for having got into lines of business for which there is no future. Many a man gives that as the primary cause of his failure. There

is something in this, it is true. The blind alley is a way to avoid, but many of us are in it before we realize what it is. Even here the fighting spirit will make its way out. Times without number we have seen the men who to blind alleys have brought eagerness and nerve and who were not left there. There is so much need of an earnest, ardent worker that life will discover him wherever he gets lost and make the most of him. Those who are left in blind alleys are those who are not worth taking out. "On the job" is a more graphic, a more inspiring phrase than we think it is. It means to be on the firing line, in the forefront of whatever is going on, with one's heart in the fray.

After all, it is a question of vitality. To the best of my knowledge Jesus Christ was the first to perceive that in vitality there are degrees. "I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly." We can. We may have it more abundantly or less abundantly, according to our ability to use it. It would be waste to force energy on those who don't know what to do with it. On the other hand, it would not be common sense to refuse it to the man eager to make the most of it. As a matter of fact, we

get of it exactly what we can turn to good account. It is behind us as a great storehouse, from which each of us takes what he wants. Life is God, and God supplies himself to us inexhaustibly and without weights and scales. The zeal with which we do our work, no matter what the work may be, is in its way the measure of our hold on the Divine. With the feeble the hold is feeble; with the energetic it is strong. There are more tests of our fellowship with God than just the moral laws of right and wrong; or perhaps the moral laws of right and wrong cover more ground than we commonly allot to them. In any case, God, Life, and Work, are the ineffable Trilogy which make up man's existence, and character inherits from them all.

IV

While the fighting spirit is admirable in itself, it needs to be kept under some restraint or else it gets out of hand. For this reason all armies work under discipline. This was perceived as early as when the job was a literal blow delivered with a club. When the Picts and Scots fought the Romans they did so under discipline, however roughly organized. Because some com-

manded and some obeyed, and those who obeyed did it willingly, their blows became effectual. Their own status, their own names, were lost sight of in the job, and so between the invaders and themselves they were able at last to build the Roman Wall.

With humility as our foundation it will not appear strange, then, if I class as our next characteristic as workers the strong principle of self-subordination. Coöperative work is a disciplined thing; otherwise it couldn't be coöperative. Discipline consists in a long procession of subordinations. The man below me submits to me; I submit to the man above me. This obtains wherever there are workers. That the man just below me should take his orders from me I can bear with an equal mind. But that I should take my orders from a man just one rung higher than myself will often stir me to a rage that destroys my pleasure and efficiency. This is one of the commonest situations among people who hold jobs, and does not need to be enlarged upon. Every man who works for a living knows something of the rancours, jealousies, and heart-burnings that exist between those who work side by side. The man who is drawing fifty a week while I am getting

only thirty-five is the object of my secret hostility. For the credit of the office, as well as for shame's sake on my part, our outward relations may be those of rough friendliness, but to my mother, my wife, my cronies, I let myself go. We all know the sort of thing I mean, for most of us, at some time in our lives, have to live in its atmosphere.

Now, all I want to say is this, that it is in just this sort of workshop that we hammer out our characters. My job is to strike my blow, and to strike in the time, place, and rhythm to which I am appointed. My duty is to make my blow as telling as I can, and beyond that to mind my own business. I must not be conceited; I must not crow; I must not be overaware that I am worth a better place with better pay, even if I think I am. If I am it will probably come to me. For the minute my state of mind must be that prescribed to all good workers by Jesus Christ: "When you have done all you are bidden, say: 'We are but servants; we have only done our duty.'"

This does not mean that I may not lawfully look forward. Of course I may. But I must not do it restlessly, nor overanxiously, nor in any

spirit which causes me to scamp what I have to do to-day because I am thinking of what it may be next year. Next year may bring better things or it may not; that will take care of itself. For this year I must stand loyally by what is given me to do and by those with whom I am doing it. I was once asked by the wife of a man promoted to a high position, on the very day when he entered on his new duties with a fine gala luncheon, if I thought it would be long before he was promoted to something higher still. The question lifted a corner of the veil on her state of mind and probably on his. As a matter of fact, he was never promoted again. He was thrown on the scrap heap and died there.

But I hope my point has been made clear. It is not worldly wisdom I am trying to express, but growth in character. My concern is with the man on the job, and how he may best enlarge himself. As far as my observation goes he will best enlarge himself by making himself small, by self-subordination. Willing to fill a low place the chances are that he will presently be asked to take a more important one. In the meantime let him persuade himself that he who has any kind of work to do has everything he needs.

Work is not only material support but spiritual comfort, a strain in the great Volga boatmen's song of human pulling together.

And so I cannot stress too much the principle that if I go into this tremendous thing at all I must do it humbly. While I may have something to give to it, it has everything to give to me. What the work itself consists in is not of overwhelming importance. It may be in collecting the garbage, or directing the Bank of England, or governing the United States. As a matter of fact, few things call for a more scientific care than collecting the garbage. There are no menial tasks; there are no humble positions. A man may be humble in filling a position, but the work involved will be honourable. Therefore, when I take a job it will add a new note to my character if I do it reverently, with all my heart, and in submission to its needs.

V

From this it follows that for work and the worker I must have a spontaneous respect. Of course, the reader may say; this is one of the axioms of our democratic world. But mere democratic respect is not the kind I mean. My idea is

not that of something given as a formality, but given because I cannot hold it back.

The root concept in the word respect is that of looking at a man the second time. You look at him first to note him, and in general that is enough. But now and then someone passes whom you turn to look at a second time, and perhaps a third and a fourth. You are interested, the implication being that interest will bring with it some degree of honour.

But you are interested first, and that is where the idea touches the springs of character. A lively interest in people and things means more than we often ascribe to it. For one thing, it is the simplest method of getting out of ourselves. For another, it is the easiest way of opening up those human relations in which the whole world becomes kin. Sympathies, courtesies, friendliness, all spring out of interest. Indifference cannot produce them; it is sterile. Those who go their own self-centred ways will in general be left to go them alone. Those who distribute their interest only with an eye to the main chance will in the long run cheat themselves. To respect people you must care for them to some extent, and so your respect is sincere.

No one is easier to recognize than a climber. No one is more quickly seen for what he is than the man driven by self-interest. In the city in which I live there appeared some years ago a handsome young fellow, of good address, with letters to people of high standing. It was understood that he was seeking to establish himself in one of the professions. Well received at first, before very long the word began to go round concerning him that he "didn't miss a trick." He was assiduous wherever he supposed there was something to be gained professionally or socially; where people seemed to be without "pull" he dropped them. Presently he was dropped himself, and by and by he disappeared, to try the same methods elsewhere. Though Nemesis does not always overtake the self-seeker so promptly, sooner or later she may be counted on. Cheap and shoddy ambitions never hit the mark.

To my mind there is only one rule for social intercourse in the large. What I mean by in the large is our haphazard contacts of every day with men and women as they come. Our intimate circle of acquaintances and friends is another

thing, and forms itself by sympathies too varied and minute to attempt to go into here. But there are daily encounters outside of these limits which may or may not be embarrassing. For these, I say, there is only one rule, and it is that of Jesus Christ. He was everybody's equal. He treated everybody as his equal. He took the same level as the highest; he raised the lowest to his own. It is extraordinary how, in a social condition so restricted, he came into touch with so many types of high and low position, high and low morality. No discourteous rich man ever put him at a disadvantage; no publican or sinner found him too superior to be his guest. His graciousness was magnificent. Never before or since has the world seen such an example of a great gentleman. He made no distinctions; he saw no distinctions. Because men were men and women were women he treated them all with superb respect. Only once to our knowledge did there ever drop from his lips, toward any individual, a disdainful epithet. When Herod had condescended to have him brought into his presence and work a few entertaining miracles, the answer came, "Tell that fox . . ."; but otherwise he never spoke of any-

one but in kindly terms. Respect was inborn in him. He respected those whom most of us would not respect. Looking at them the second time he found them, whatever their past records, still full of grace and reality. This was all he required to call forth his own reality and grace.

It has often surprised me that the Church has so rarely held up as a model this charming example of good manners. I do not think, as a matter of fact, that I have ever heard a reference to it in any public utterance, secular or ecclesiastical. In no Life of Christ that I can recall have I seen so much as a mention of a supreme good breeding which seems to me to merit attention as much as what would commonly be called the greater aspects of his personality. This is the more strange for the reason that it comes within the scope of our quite possible imitation. Theological interpretation has made so much in his life difficult for us to understand that we might have been expected to seize the more eagerly on a point like this which brings him close to our poor human hearts. Since a standard of behaviour between man and man and man and woman has always been needed, do we not see it here?

VI

It will be found, too, I think, that looking at our fellow men without prejudice leads naturally to the open mind. The open mind is the nearest approach we have made as yet to the fountain of perpetual youth. Few people have it. When they have they are blessings to mankind. They alone solve the problem, which many find so heartbreaking, as to how to hold down the job and become of more permanent value in spite of the years.

Years present the most hostile force the worker has to deal with. In youth there is everything to make him confident. He is one of those assaulting the old guard in the hope of taking their places. At forty he is firmly established and able to hold his own. At fifty he begins to be anxious, to feel himself pressed back by the oncoming tide of new people. At sixty he is being spoken of as old, as having done good work in his time, though now that time is past. He himself knows that it is not past, and yet the new forces crowding in cannot but crowd him out. Presently he finds that he is out, with good years still before him, and good work yet to be done. There used

to be a cry, Too old at sixty! Then it became, Too old at forty! What it is now I do not know, but there is always a Too old!

But neither cry was ever raised against age with the open mind. Age with the open mind is instinctively recognized as one of the most precious assets a business, a government, a nation, can possess. We have numerous examples at this very minute of age with the open mind conducting the most tremendous affairs in industry, science, politics, finance, and religion. We call them men of unusual power, but the secret behind that power we do not often pause to analyze. Even men of unusual power can close their minds and become too old at sixty or at forty. But every history of every country affords us instances of those who have kept on waxing in vigour and authority right up to the hour of being taken hence. Why have they been such exceptions? Not because of unusual physical strength, for many of them have been lifelong semi-invalids. The key to their ability to sway men two generations younger than themselves will be found always, I think, in the opening of the spirit to the sun.

We shall perhaps see more clearly what we mean by the open mind if we consider for a min-

ute the symptoms of the closed. Even these cannot be taken in detail, but there is one so prominent that it will get instant recognition from every one of us. It is hostility toward a new idea before we have had time to examine it, and simply because it is new. It may not be new to the world and time—few ideas are—but it is new to ourselves, and because it is we reject it. Sometimes we reject it with a quiet disdain, sometimes with indignation. We all know the process in one or another of its forms, and there is this to be said about it, that on the very first time it begins to operate we begin to grow old.

The young mind is naturally open. Receptivity is its business. All through the years of school, of college, of early professional life, it goes on expanding. The world is full of things to learn. Learning them only adds experience to experiment. So far, so good! Then there comes a moment which passes as unnoticed as that first imperceptible shade of dusk which makes the petals of a flower turn inward. The mental action reverses, without anyone's being aware of it. That is the critical instant of the average human life, and it is gone before we know that it has been on its way. A new suggestion comes, is detested

or derided on grounds of novelty alone, and the current of a life has been changed.

Ideas get their value not from being new, but from being ideas. As ideas they merit the same second glance as individuals, with perhaps a consequent respect. Respect does not necessitate adoption, but it does imply consideration. Consideration entails the use of the mind, and everything is there. The open mind thinks. It does not so much matter what it thinks about so long as it is in operation. The closed mind dismisses without thinking, rejecting the stimulation of new thought. There are those to whom the very words "new thought" form an ugly combination.

And yet if we but knew it, new things to think about furnish and feed a fountain richer with young energy than any Ponce de León ever dreamed about. New things to do, on which youth depends so much, grow fewer and fewer with time; new food for the mind is inexhaustible. Naturally we think first of the things that most closely concern ourselves, and the new lights we get on them are a positive enlargement of the world. These new lights seem to come of their own accord, as to the astronomer new stars appear in the sky. There is no effort on our part,

no straining of what we call the brain. They shine unsolicited, as if some torch of the Spirit lighted them. Often they come to be gently set aside; often they have the surprise of a new inspiration. "When I write a book," said Pierre de Coulvain, a French writer once widely read in England and America, "there are always two who work on it. There is myself who holds the pen; and there is the Invisible Other who tells me what to say." Well, that Invisible Other is the faithful companion of the open mind.

The open mind is ready to take ideas as they come, and at least see what they contain; and it is because so few minds are open that civilization is so slow in its advance. Human progress has always to fight its way. It gets little or no help from humankind. We fight off new revelations as instinctively as the savage of one tribe fights off the savage of another tribe. The mere sight of him passing along is an excuse for the hurling of a spear. It is no more than a repetition of what everybody knows to say that that is the way in which, through the whole history of man, we have welcomed the statements of new truths. Those who have brought them we have always stoned, tormented, crucified.

It was a terrible day in the story of our race when we coined the word orthodoxy—the right way of thinking. The very running together of the syllables gave the closed mind an excuse for keeping itself closed. The assumption that there was a right way of thinking, and that therefore there could be no other way, forbade forever all liberty of mind. It is a curious word, orthodoxy. Though Greek in origin it was never currently used by the Greeks, probably because they could never have framed such a meaning as we now give to it. Aristotle seems to have coined it to denote thinking clearly, and he alone apparently ever used it. It remained for the Græco-Latin Christians, some hundreds of years after Aristotle's time, to perceive its value as an iron hoop. From that minute a premium was put on the closed mind. The open mind could only be kept at the risk of martyrdom, and during hundreds of years of the Christian Era men and women died for it. Even to-day, in the liberal Twentieth Century, thinking must be so largely done in droves that the man with a mind of his own must often pay the price in petty persecutions.

There is no such thing as orthodoxy, a right way of thinking. Knowledge is too persistently

in a state of flux to allow of our ever keeping pace with its ebb and flow. The minutes are too pregnant with new possibilities for us ever to say: Thus it must be, or: Thus it may not be, and still less: Thus it shall be forever. Let me make this clear by a parable, which, after all, is not a parable, but a simple fact that any boy or girl will verify. A few years ago there was in one of our cities, with a population of some three hundred thousand closed minds, a man with a big open mind and a big idea within it. The horseless carriage had come in, the luxury of the rich. This man meant to place it within the limits of the poor, and great was the guffaw that went up at his expense. When the first experiments were made to run a few hundred yards along the streets, and promptly broke down, the closed minds lined the sidewalks to jeer at them. To-day the man with the open mind is reckoned the wealthiest on earth, and millions and millions of all nations, and peoples, and tongues, rise up and thank him. Literally, he has made the world an easier and pleasanter place for all of us to live in.

The moral of this must be evident. New ideas are not always good, but they are always worth

considering. What may not be practical to-day may be practical to-morrow, and will be all the better perhaps for simmering along in the subconsciousness. Some of the vastest and most beneficent projects worked out by man have for years lain as seeds that seemed unable to germinate in somebody's mind. You never know of what use an idea is going to be to you. After half a lifetime of being apparently purposeless it will fit itself in at the right time and place. Once ideas come and have been entertained they never really go. It is not a question of remembering them; they stay of themselves. By staying they enrich the nature, the heart, the spirit, of him who stores them away. Henceforth he is like the householder, who was himself like the kingdom of heaven, able at any time to bring out of his treasures things new and old.

VII

I cannot leave the subject or character and work without a word as to honesty. It was not my purpose to deal with such big obvious themes, this little book being rather, with regard to character, a picker-up of unconsidered trifles. But the pressure of the topic is too strong. Hon-

esty is too dangerously imperilled. Not only has it become our national vice—of proportions far more appalling than the drink evil ever was—but there is almost no public opinion to counteract it. It is this last fact which seems to me one of the most menacing any country ever had to deal with, and which must be dealt with by the common man or not at all.

Before tremendous financial scandals, such as repeatedly confront us on the first pages of our morning papers, the common man may feel himself helpless; but when it comes to the formation of a public opinion the job is his. A strong and reasonable public opinion is the governing principle of this country. When it shows itself decidedly nothing can stand before it. This has been proved at many grave crises in history and will be proved again. Where it asserts itself, million-tongued, nobody dares to defy it. As well defy a sandstorm or a herd of stampeding elephants.

1. It is many years now since theft, either on a small or a colossal scale, began to be aired in the public press. In the early days, perhaps two generations ago, I suppose readers were shocked by it. By the time I can begin to remember, any-

thing like shock was merged in the fact of a brand-new excitement. If we really got to the bottom of the business I think we should find that most of us prefer that crimes should be committed so as to furnish us with thrills.

In fact, as a people, the ordinary happenings of life, such as assassinations, banditries, burglaries, together with a daring ingenuity in crime new, I imagine, in human chronicles, do not give us thrills enough. Novels of crime are best sellers; plays about crime will fill the largest theatres. Within ten years the number of celebrated murder cases retold and reprinted would fill a good-sized bookcase. Interest comes close to sympathy. If as a people anyone were to charge us with being on the side of the accused, no matter what he is accused of, we should have small ground for complaint.

Whatever our professions of principle there is an instinct within most of us hostile to law and order. We have no public opinion in favour of the law. When we read in the paper that some bank messenger has been stabbed and robbed of fifty thousand dollars we have no personal sense of outrage. We pass to the next item on the page

with far less emotion than we should feel on learning that Starkey had knocked out Callaghan. The latter would be something of an historical event; the former a mere incident of the streets.

I repeat, the awful occurrence leaves us with no personal sense of outrage. We did not know the man; we had no financial interest in the bank. If we made the observation: "Another bank messenger murdered and robbed," it is probably all we should ever say of it and the last we should ever think. The Press does not take it up; the Church does not take it up. Good citizens hold no meetings to protest against lifeless submission to such attacks upon our safety and take no measures to see that they shall not be indefinitely repeated. Apart from what is done by the police no thought of any kind is given to the subject, and if it is a thrill we are looking for, the next day will doubtless provide a more startling one.

So it is that we have become indifferent to dishonesty. There is so much of it that it drugs us. We have come to taking it as if we had never known anything else. I once saw a poor little suffering baby whose skin was plastered with

some coal-black stuff to keep down the eczema, while her hands were bound to her sides so that she should not scratch herself; but she smiled and crowed and enjoyed her life just like any other baby, because it was all that she was used to. She had no idea that life could be otherwise; and half the time neither have we as to the dishonesty in the midst of which we live. We take it for granted as a necessary feature of national and civic existence. Some years ago I lived in a town where the taxes were high and we never saw any result from them. That the money went into the pockets of politicians we knew, and laughed. It was a green laugh, I admit, but it was all the protest we ever made. When our mayor, who had been reëlected to office some seven or eight times, declared on the eve of a new election that he couldn't run again because he must look for a job in which he could make more money, the sheer impudent humour of the thing returned him to the city hall for another term. In the same town we had a Good Government Association composed of the most high-minded and public-spirited men and women you could find anywhere. But it became so certain that their mere backing would defeat anyone, however

likely to win, that the really good government candidates fought shy of their support.

These little incidents could be paralleled in any city in the union. An important man, who has himself held high offices, has recently declared in a public address: "The time is coming when one of the two parties must go before the country with the slogan, 'Down with Public Thievery!' but which of the parties shall it be?" The question raises a grim smile, but it doesn't raise anything else.

And that is my point. It ought to raise a strong, even sullen, resentment. We ought not to be able to sit down contentedly under this insult to national pride. But we do. We don't care. We talk much of the honour of the flag and are touchy as to things of slight concern, but when it comes to an imputation on national honour we grin and bear it.

For in its original sense honestness meant not exactness in the matter of exchange: it meant honour. The Latin *honestas* was probity, integrity, a sense of right. It was the first element in self-respect, the first quality of a Roman gentleman. The highest mark of character, it credited a man with whatever was noble and distinguished,

and only a fall in ideals could have made him *honestus* for the poor little merits of paying his debts and being scrupulous in bargaining.

The distinction the Roman made between *honor* and *honestas* was that *honor* came from without, whereas *honestas* meant inner singleness of heart. The first was conferred on you by others; the second you evolved from within yourself. It was your own standard of your own character; your own appraisement of what you ought to be. Others might judge as to whether or not you were *honestus,* but you knew it before anybody else. It was not primarily in externals, but in what you aimed at being, in what you knew of your own soul.

And something of this still clings to the word honesty, even after we have limited its application to counting-house methods, and to measures and weights. The French preserve this sense of the word more accurately than we do, in that *un honnête homme* is still for them a man of honour, while for what we mean by an honest man they use the clumsier form of *un homme honnête,* which gives the impression of an afterthought. In any case the source of honesty is not in an outward policy adopted because it is expe-

dient; it is an essential feature of the self. I am honest not because the law compels me, but because I cannot be anything else. It is in me. The suggestion of dishonesty would be an outrage on what I am. I know myself at least to that extent, that theft, or anything resembling theft, would brand my inner self with a disgrace more unbearable than crime which might be considered worse.

But in the juggling with words which takes place as centuries go by, honesty as a word for what I have been trying to express has given place to honour. In some far past they must have been born of parent stems, and now, at least, honour expresses the more chivalric phase of honesty. It is as men of honour rather than as honest men that we first get the measure of ourselves.

But who ever gives a thought to honour nowadays? I wonder. By whom is it ever mentioned? By whom is it ever taught? I suppose that in schools and in such organizations as the Boy and Girl Scouts a good deal of emphasis must be laid upon it; but among adults, I fear, for anyone to sum himself up as a man of honour would be a little high-flown. Once it flashed on

a man's lips as quickly as his sword from its scabbard. Now, in the rough-and-tumble of American life, to speak of one's self, even to think of one's self, as a man of honour first of all would smack of old romances. Some undoubtedly there are to whom it would be natural; but for the great rank and file of us the perpetual consciousness of an inner compulsion to which we give the name of honour is an experience almost unknown.

2. And it is to some such reason as this that I attribute the decay of a public opinion in defence of honesty. What we are not aware of in ourselves we shall not strenuously demand from others. We feel, as I have hinted, no sense of outrage when the bank messenger has been stabbed and robbed, because we are not in the habit of resenting such proceedings. In a dim wordless way we feel that it is the sort of thing that might be done by anyone in need of cash, with a knife conveniently at hand. It is not right, of course; but then so many people do as bad and worse that we cannot be too severe.

Certainly we are not too severe. As a matter of fact, our complaisance has in it a suggestion of connivance. If a man can be stabbed and

robbed and the public doesn't get excited, then the public to some extent aids and abets the criminal. The public should always have in it some of the spirit of the Canadian Mounted Police who will track a wrongdoer down if it involves years of pursuit through the trackless wilderness. We forget the wrongdoer as soon as we have read the details of the wrong.

This ease of forgetfulness is an American weakness which has often called for comment, but to some degree it is fostered in us by the heavy-footed processes of justice. Charges of big dishonesty are raised in the Press from time to time. Investigations are ordered. For a few days it seems as if something were going to be done. Then there is a lull; then a revival; then another lull. Months, even years, go by, till all public interest in the case has been outlived. National indignation gives way to national indifference, the whole thing evaporates, no one knows how, and a nation-wide injury has been done.

3. That nation-wide injury is in our lethargic attitude toward dishonesty. So many are guilty and so many get off that we become inured to it. The names of the highest officials, of the most important public men, are besmirched, and

apparently no one thinks the worse of them. Mountains of accusation do not bring forth so much as a mouse of conviction, and so we form the habit of shrugging our shoulders, and not caring.

Perhaps the gravest charge we can lay at the door of the people of this country is that terrible things are happening every day and nobody seems to care. Nobody seems to have any sense of personal responsibility. If we have, we assume our own helplessness to such a degree that anything like action becomes paralyzed. It is hardly needful to point out that nothing was ever more deadly to character. To sit down tamely under great social wrongs and do nothing, however futile, to right them is unworthy of men and women with a stake in the country, and with children to come after them. It is a matter of common knowledge that our crime record is the most appalling in the world, and yet the fact leaves most of us apathetic. Mention it at any dinner table, in any club, in any chance gathering of citizens, and if you get a responsive, "Too bad!" it will be as much as you will ever get. Dishonesty is at the bottom of most of our acts

of violence, and dishonesty scarcely strikes from any of us a single gleam of ire.

"But what can *I* do about it?" is perhaps the protest the individual puts up.

"You can get angry," I would answer back. "You can get into one of those storms of rage in which you cannot keep silent. You can talk. Public opinion is formed by one person talking to another, not mildly or genteelly, but straight out from the shoulder. There is such a thing as passionate indignation, and this is the place for it. You can make yourself a bore; you may even be known among your friends as a man with a bee in his bonnet, or, as they may say, a 'nut'; but you will accomplish something. They may smile at you superficially, but in their hearts they will commend you. You will convince one man, who will convince another man, who will convince a third, and so the chain will be flung out.

"As a boy I once saw the starting of a forest fire, and a wonderful sight it was. We were camping and had just had breakfast. Someone began beating out the fire at which we had cooked it before we pulled up stakes. Accidentally he

threw a brand beneath a spruce whose branches swept the ground. The first thing to blaze was a twig so small that it seemed an easy thing to extinguish. But before anyone could reach it another twig had caught, and then another and another. With the speed of a flash of lightning the flame ran up the tree till it was a pyramid of fire. But almost simultaneously pyramids of fire were burning all around us. The fire spread with a rapidity which the eye could not follow, and yet it was never more than from twig to twig. It was each single twig which passed the flame to another single twig. There was no mass movement, so to speak. It was only a kindling of units. So on a subject like this; let one man start the blaze and conviction will leap along."

Conviction of what? First of the shame of our national dishonesty, and then of the cowardice of supinely sitting down under it. The cowardice of supinely sitting down under it is to my mind almost worse than the dishonesty itself. It is not sufficient to leave such matters in the hands of investigating committees, or even of the police. We must feel strongly ourselves. We must try to make those near us feel as strongly as we. If enough people feel strongly something will be

done, as has been done already in more than one national crisis in this and other countries. It is public opinion that counts, and public opinion counts only when you get enough people deeply stirred.

That is why I say that this problem is, in the first place, one for the common man to deal with. He is in fact the only one who can deal with it effectively, because, when all is said and done, his is the will that has its way. The Napoleons and Mussolinis come and go, but the common man abides. By the common man I mean, of course, the average type of citizen. It is his will, not legislation, which, in the last analysis, determines law. Law that has not his backing is generally worse than no law at all, since it lacks its main guarantee against violation.

4. And if, as things are, the average citizen is indifferent to dishonesty it is chiefly, I believe, because the heinousness of the present situation has never been adequately brought to his attention. For reasons too obscure for me to puzzle out we are not instinctively a law-abiding race. We need to be educated before we become that, and we have two great institutions of moral education. We have (a) the Press; (b) the Church.

These two, in anything remotely like coöperation, represent a force which the ordinary mind would find irresistible.

(a) Under the term "Press" I include all daily, weekly, and monthly publications. Their combined suasive power is beyond calculation. Once they take up a cause with anything like seriousness it is as good as won. If our editors could only be induced to start a campaign against dishonesty, public and private, the land could be cleansed of it, relatively speaking, in the course of a few years. Once that mighty voice had said plainly enough, and often enough, and with sincerity enough, "We will not have it!" it would be obeyed.

As yet we see no sign of any such crusade, but the time for it may come. We can be sure it will come the minute the average citizen makes a demand for it. After all, it is he who speaks through the voice of the Press, and once his heart is moved he becomes the Invisible Other behind editor and writer alike. The thing is to move his heart, and to that end we must turn to the second great educational agency.

(b) I wish I could believe that the Church was living up to its high mission in turning us

to honest thoughts and ways. The national facts are before it as they are before the rest of us, but we wait in vain to see that its sensibilities are shocked. Some three years ago the American Bar Association published a report giving the statistics of crime in this country—crime, it must be remembered, directly or indirectly connected with dishonesty in one or another of its many forms—and some of us watched for a clang of repercussion from the churches. But we had our trouble for our pains. To the best of my knowledge the pulpit was practically dumb. The most sensitive consciences in the country seemed wholly unperturbed. Dishonesty, whether on the scale of colossal highway robbery or on that of petty larceny, was left to the police, while the churches gave themselves up, as they so generally do, to discussions of things which to many of us seem distressingly beside the mark.

And yet it is right out of the churches that the grafters, thieves, and bandits spring. The shady men of business have been brought up in Sunday schools and are sending their children there. Thousands of them have been choir boys, altar boys, members of church clubs, of Boy Scout troops, of Bands of Hope, according to religious

affiliation. They are not as a rule dark creatures of the underworld; they come from respectable families. What they have lacked is sound moral training. The wickedness of theft has doubtless been pointed out to them, but it has not been ground in. Grinding in, intensely, passionately, is what we all need, but it cannot be done so long as our spiritual guides are so nerveless in taking up the task. Surely we need something to counteract the awful records of the daily press, and where should we look for it more instinctively than to those who speak in the name of God?

But how often do they talk to us of so simple a theme as honesty, treating the subject thoroughly and instilling us with a love of it? What Savonarola, what Wesley, ever warns that dishonesty, from small pilfering up to staggering nation-wide fraud, is undermining our characters both as a people and as individuals? The Protestant churches are credited with having a great deal of it sitting in their pews and leading in their worship. When do they ever beseech and implore their members to give it up themselves and set their faces against it in all others? Much of the graft in civic politics is said to go into the pockets of men in good standing in the

Roman Catholic Communion. But when have we ever heard that mighty church issue its dread anathema against Public Thievery?

Do I exaggerate? Am I making too much of an unimportant thing? Am I seeing a mountain of national danger where there is only a molehill of graft, banditry, burglary, commercial cheating, and minor theft? Well, it seems to me I have the newspapers on my side, as well as the statistics. This very morning I read in the papers that yesterday the houses of five of my friends and neighbours were broken into, and that the church which I attend has had its poor-box robbed. So it is all over the land, a daily annoyance when it is no worse. It is not so in other countries, even in some which we consider backward. Of this I had an illustration some three years ago which may be worth citing. Spending part of the winter at Cannes I stayed at a large hotel of international reputation. On the first occasion of leaving my room I was locking my door behind me when a passing housekeeper stopped and said: "There's no occasion to do that, sir. Nobody locks his door here except on going to bed." Moreover, I discovered that a hanging-closet for each room opened not into

the room itself, but into the hall, and that that too remained unlocked both night and day. Here were stored suits to be pressed, boots to be cleaned, wraps and overcoats to be brushed, and during the night the valets came along and attended to the business. Now anyone who knows the Riviera knows it as a haunt of half the adventurers in Europe. The maids and waiters are a drifting population, here to-day and gone to-morrow. And yet one could live weeks and months among them with a security one could never feel at Bar Harbor or Palm Beach.

Why? What is the flaw in the American character which makes us look like a nation of potential thieves? The answer to that someone else will have to give. I am trying not to pontificate or to deal with matters too high for me; and yet I cannot but feel that the situation is serious enough to warrant crying a warning from the housetops, in season and out of season, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER AND PLAY

I

A MAN'S character may be judged by his amusements more easily perhaps than by anything else. In the more serious things of life he is under constraint; in play the bars are down. If he ever shows himself as what he is it is then.

Conversely a man's amusements have a determining influence on his character. They are not mere pastimes, leaving him untouched. The fact that they are what he chooses gives something like directing force to the evolution of himself. In work we are not always our own masters; in play the mere exercise of choice develops us more freely as what we actually are. Play has therefore an importance in life which we do not often think of its possessing.

II

Play up to forty and play after forty differ from each other in nature and purpose. When I

say forty I mean an age which becomes a turning point, a few years earlier than that I have named, or a few years later, according to individual temperaments. Before this climacteric we might say that amusement is creative; after it, it is re-creative. That is to say, with the younger, amusement is instinctive, spontaneous, part of the process of living; with the older, it becomes something to be considered, deliberately selected, and adapted to an end. Not consciously, of course! A climacteric is rarely a conscious change in life. In general it passes before we notice it. In the difference in ourselves before forty as compared with after that age I think the first intimation we get is that we laugh less.

That, however, is probably the case with us all. The decay of laughter is one of the peculiar signs of our modern civilization. Even the young laugh less easily than they did a generation or two ago. Elderly people, in comparison with the days when, let us say, the novels of Dickens were still fresh, seem scarcely to laugh at all. When they do there is nine times out of ten a forced, conscious note in their mirth, which makes it a scream among women, and among men a humourless guffaw. The feminine slang "a scream," to

indicate a joke, is collateral proof of this. Between screaming and laughing there is, as a matter of fact, neither connection nor resemblance. People of my age can easily recall how their elders used to laugh, say, thirty or forty years ago. They laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks, till they became literally uncontrollable. These were the readers for whom Dickens wrote, and Artemus Ward, and the young Mark Twain. Lord Dundreary was uproarious fun to them, and so was *Box and Cox*. Among them laughter was infectious, and a trifle was an excuse for it.

Speaking of this decay of laughter at a large dinner in New York some years ago, I found that my neighbours disagreed with me. It was a men's dinner, some forty guests between the ages of thirty and fifty being seated at one long table. My place happened to be on the left of my host, so that we were well placed for observing the rest of the company. I suggested that we notice how many people laughed during the rest of the dinner. This some three or four of us did, and during the hour or more that the dinner continued to go on no one laughed at all.

This, I venture to say, will be found, with more

or less variation, in any social gathering. There may be screaming on the part of women, and guffawing on that of men; but of genuine, easy, merry laughter there will not be a great deal. It may be that that large section of American society which has formed the habit of "throwing a party"—I believe that "throwing a brawl" is now considered the more classic formula—has killed some of the spirit of enjoyment. The faculty for enjoyment is a delicate one, and when coarsened or vulgarized it dies. What survives is merely an ugly taste for slapstick roistering. It meets you in night clubs, dance restaurants, and a certain kind of private gathering. I mention it only because to many of us it is the only form of social entertainment known. Noise, drinking, dancing, senselessness are its higher elements, while in its lower it often leads to worse. But when I speak of play I mean healthy play. Diseased play, such as I refer to, widespread as it may be, we must leave to psychopathic treatment.

III

I have said that up to forty or thereabouts play may be considered as creative. By that I

mean that in early life it is the first of our energies. All our other energies are subsidiary to it, and to some extent parasitic. A baby's first sign that he recognizes those around him is a smile. The baby who doesn't smile can be known at once as of backward intelligence. A sense of fun develops before the first inkling of speech, while "Creep-mouse, creep-mouse" and "This little pig went to market" count among the first initiations into life.

In proportion as the little fellow begins to grasp the significance of what he sees life takes the form of a great game. Play becomes his chief occupation. For years his toys form part of his reality. His imagination is so alert that between his reality and that of grown-up people there are often clashes and discrepancies, but whatever can be made to fit with facts as he sees them he is prepared to accept and assimilate. He lives for fun, but it is a creative fun, dynamic and intelligent.

This was the great discovery Froebel made when he saw the educational value of the game. Before his time the period of childhood in which play is the only occupation had seemed, in a measure, to be so much lost time. That is, it was

lost time except for the use the child could make of it without help from outside. And the use the child does make of it in such a way is little short of marvellous. What he learns unaided, or with very little aid, is a triumph of intelligence; and most of it he will at once turn into play. Observing this, Froebel conceived of the idea of teaching through play, the success of the kindergarten system all over the world justifying his acuteness.

But Froebel's idea went further than the kindergarten. Rather, perhaps, he saw the kindergarten principle as extending throughout life. The love of amusement is something we do not outlive. Most of us try to manage our lives so as to get something in the way of entertainment every day. The type of entertainment changes with age and degree of health, but the craving for it is constant. Froebel was the first to point out that not to use, at least to some extent, a force so tremendous in our self-development was a colossal waste of energy. Though he could not make the comparison, we ourselves can see that it has been on the scale of that wastage of water power which has gone on since the beginning of the world.

IV

And in my judgment the right use of amusement has become one of the great problems confronting the people of to-day. We have so much amusement that not to use some of it at least as more than an evanescent pastime seems a foolish misuse of opportunity. I am far from suggesting that some serious intent should underlie all our lighter hours, but we have so many of such hours that it is a pity that they should all be given up to inanities. I have said that a man's character can be seen more easily in amusements than in any other way, and yet if that is literally the case, is not the word "inane" the one to be written down of most of us? It is greatly to be feared that most people take their pleasures stupidly. By this I mean that the pleasures are either pointless in themselves or they are taken pointlessly. They are indulged in to kill time, or for the sake of going with the crowd, or for no reason whatever beyond a mindless prompting. When they are over they leave nothing behind them as either refreshment or diversion. Of much of the going to movies, theatres, and ball games, of much of the jazz-and-hip-flask dancing, of much of the

playing of bridge and other card games, can this be said. They sometimes excite without amusing, and more often bore without doing either, but they are not methods of reinvigoration. Wasteful of energy and interest, they stultify the mind without doing anything to rebuild the body.

Let me point out that I am speaking here only of *much* of this way of diverting one's self, not by any means of all of it. To be able to discriminate between wise and unwise amusement, let us go back to what I said at the outset and consider briefly the two stages of play: A—the creative; B—the re-creative. Not till we get these clear in our minds shall we be able to proceed on principle.

V

A. In childhood, in boyhood, in girlhood, in early manhood and womanhood life is essentially light-hearted. Cares infest it even then, but they are easily thrown aside to give place to the natural love of fun. Young people laugh at nothing, thriving on laughter. Though their troubles seem tragic while they last, they do not last very long. It is, in fact, only because trouble is so abhorrent to their years that it strikes them as so unendurable. The minute they can throw it

off they throw it off, to become once more as carefree and irresponsible as circumstances will permit. It is through the long years of growth in freedom from care and in irresponsibility that characters get the strength to bear the burden when it comes.

This is something which the puritan inheritance finds it difficult to admit. Until within a very few years severity and repression were considered as the best preparation for life. Doubtless they imparted discipline, and discipline is never a total loss; but it was the kind of discipline we give to a tree when we lop its branches to make it take a certain shape. You can get a more beautiful tree by giving it the soil and air and sun in which nature will make it grow after its own design.

The young American of to-day has a chance of doing this such as never before has been offered to the youth among mankind. Never before, anywhere on earth, have conditions been so favourable for young humanity's development. In the more fortunate cases, of which there are many, excellent prenatal care brings him into the world as a model of baby physique. Good food, good air, good housing, and a scrupulous attention to all

details of exercise and health are the matter of course of his childhood. Schools make such a study of his needs and desires that nothing pertaining to his welfare is overlooked. All this is done in a way to leave him relatively free, with no sense of being brought up under glass. The atmosphere is created, and within it he is left to himself.

If you happen to live near a great university, as I do, you will see some noble specimens of what the human race can do when given every chance in these ways. In height, in health, in vigour, in ease, they suggest the advance guard of a new stage in evolution. What they are mentally I have no means of knowing, but with that for the moment I am not concerned. I am thinking first of the young animal, and of the young animal chiefly as he is at play.

And this one thing we notice from the start, that in his play the first element is physical activity. This is true of the normal child, whether he has had the advantages cited above or whether he has not. From the time he is able to use his hands and feet he wants to be on the go. Nurses and mothers know the incessant watching that must

be given to their charges for at least two or three of the childhood years to keep them from getting into mischief.

1. Out of this springs that love of athletics which forms so large a part of the interests of youth. To the growing frame exercise is imperative. In the ordinary movement from place to place, from home to school, from school to home, from one spot to another, as the small errands of the day carry one, young people do not get enough of it. Moreover, in all our cities public and private conveyances tend to usurp what even a few years ago were the functions of the feet. As I write I look out at a private school for boys. Electrics bring most of them to the very door; those who do not come in this way drive their own cars. Of the hundred and more pupils it is probable that not half a dozen walk there. Boys in cities rarely have anything in the way of old-fashioned "chores" to do, and so have another source of exercise cut off. This being the case athletics in schools and colleges must become of more and more importance. There is a sense in which they take precedence over anything learned from books. To keep the body

fresh, vigorous, and clean is the most primitive of our impulses; to keep it active, even restlessly active, is one of the best guarantees against bad habits. The lymphatic, sedentary lad is always more in danger than the noisy, troublesome one, who neglects his studies and would turn life into sport. Not that he is to be held up as an example, but of the two he is probably the healthier. While schools and colleges must deal with both, the lymphatic fellow is likely to be found the more difficult.

I think it worth while to speak of this because the subject is so generally misunderstood. The tyranny of games is often a theme for satire on the part of Englishmen looking back to their boyhood years, just as among ourselves we hear frequent protests against the adulation of athletes in our universities. There is much to justify both, but more to be said on the side of athletics. Youth is the time for storing up physical energy. Once stored up, something of it lasts. Years later its invigoration will be felt in toughness of vitality. Old age will often reap the benefit of the creative play enjoyed at twelve or fifteen. To the boy or the girl an hour's fun is no more than an hour's fun, and is over with the hour, and yet for the rest

of a lifetime it hives up something like concentrated sunshine.

2. Not unconnected with games, and yet wholly distinct as a manifestation of character, are the fads and hobbies which children develop for longer or shorter periods. Queer little personal phenomena they are, sometimes no more than a reflection of someone else, and more times perhaps a genuine betrayal of a spirit that cannot express itself in words. These are the oddities which the discipline of other days suppressed, and which even now an overbusy father or mother will sweep aside as "stuff and nonsense." But to anyone really on the watch for the evolution of character, and anxious to help it along, they are precious revelations.

For example, I know a little boy of nine who for three years past has shown an intense interest in the designing and building of boats. When he first took it up nothing would have been easier than for his parents to laugh him out of it, but they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they provided him with such tools and material as he needed, and now his work can truly be spoken of as skilful. This does not mean that he is to become a great shipbuilder, though perhaps

he may; but whatever he becomes the experience he gets from this new creative play will always prove a useful asset.

Another child has seen her first opera, which happens to have been *Die Walküre*. At once she has been inspired to write similar operas about each of Brunhilde's seven sisters. Words and music are alike to come from her pen, as they did from Wagner's. Far from considering this grandiose ambition a waste of time, her parents have supplied her with a modernized copy of the *Nibelungenlied*—she happens to read German as easily as a German child—and now she is deep in it, not only searching for libretti but enchanted by the saga for its own sake.

Another child has begun collecting postage stamps. On condition that he makes his own stamp album—the blank-book will be supplied to him—each country headed by its name, its capital, its form of government, its coinage and the equivalents in dollars, with the figures of its population, his father will help him to get stamps. The boy is eagerly at work, amassing knowledge which will stay in his mind as long as he lives.

These are but illustrations of what every child manifests at some time, the desire being the out-

come of some obscure self-development which his elders could never trace. Wise parents will welcome it as a clue to a nature whose secret will in reality never be quite disclosed to them. Not only are such hobbies useful while they last, but as hints of a future career they are beyond valuation. Allowed free and happy play they will keep pace with that fine physical development which modern conditions permit, already to some, and soon it may be hoped to all.

3. Akin to the hobby is the child's pursuit of knowledge. For knowledge his mind is hungry. One of the first apperceptions to which he ever comes is that of his own ignorance. Everyone who has ever had anything to do with the bringing up of a child knows that period of perpetual questioning, amusing, tiresome, exasperating, and delightful all at once, and covering everything from God to the electron. It passes only when the child is able to get some of the information for himself, and this he learns to do gradually as he begins to read. To the average normally intelligent child the power of reading for himself is the first stage of admission into the major mysteries of life. It is of the utmost importance, then, that at the earliest possible moment he be taught how to

read and what to read, and to read with the pleasure which is profit.

This guidance will differ with individual children. They will not all read the same kind of books, nor is it well that they should. It must always be remembered that it is not discipline but amusement that you are offering to the child, but if in the course of amusing him a little information can be stored up in the opening mind so much the better.

With very little children this is done. It is through books that entertain that they learn their letters and how to spell simple words. But there comes a time in the lives of boys and girls—say from twelve and fifteen upward—when the question of reading becomes a serious one. It is important that they should read the right things; it is even more important that they should read something, whether the right thing or not. Advice on this subject they will not always take; compulsion they will not submit to. In any case, reading done under compulsion is scarcely better than time thrown away.

In a home with a reading atmosphere children will naturally take to books. They see their elders reading them; they hear them discussed; their

curiosity aroused, they themselves want to see what others have found interesting. Neither advice nor compulsion is needed here, as the air itself does the work.

But what elders read is not always the best material for a younger generation, though here, I think, we often worry ourselves needlessly. In reading, the young mind has a way of absorbing what it can understand, veiling the rest in innocence. I once looked over the shoulder of a little girl—she had grown up to speak and read French as if it had been her mother tongue—because I saw her absorbed in a volume of Alfred de Musset's. Aware that his public was not one of little girls of ten, my first impulse was to take the book from her hands and tell her she mustn't read it. But remembering how such a line of action had affected myself at her age, I asked her merely what the play was about—I had seen that it was *Une Nuit Vénitienne*—and how she was enjoying it. Oh, it was very interesting, and she was enjoying it very much, but it didn't seem to her very reasonable. Just at the point at which she had arrived the gentleman was saying that if the lady was not at his rooms by midnight he would shoot himself; "but that," she commented, "seems

to me so awfully late to expect any lady to be making calls." Without further comment I allowed her to finish the play.

The same protective innocence has been noticeable all over the United States within the past few months, and there is nothing satiric in what I say. One of our biggest best-sellers has dealt with a subject which was probably ancient at the time the Cities of the Plain were destroyed. But millions of our women and girls read the book and positively saw nothing but a brave girl's struggle against romantic odds. This can happen. It can happen among the shocking and initiated young people of to-day more easily than we may suppose. One day when I was an undergraduate I was rummaging in the college library and chanced to open a novel of George Sand's on the title-page of which some wiseacre had written the words: "This book should be read by no young person." Immediately I took the book out, wasting valuable time vainly hunting down something hurtful to my morals. This is generally the effect of outspoken condemnation of a book. Some years ago, in the autumn when Mrs. Glyn's *Three Weeks* was before the public, I was told by the head mistress of a girls'

boarding school that every girl had arrived with a copy of that masterpiece which she had been reading on the train. Having heard so much of it in her own home she had been led to purchase it from the butcher's boy who purveys the train literature, and was probably not much the worse for it.

What I am trying to point out is that in the matter of books it is best to let people, even quite young people, ostensibly find their own way. If you don't want your children to read a certain book, don't have it in the house and don't say anything about it.

On the other hand, if you do want them to read, leave the books lying on the tables, discussing them with other people, but not recommending them to the boys and girls themselves. Sooner or later they will pick them up and read the more attentively because they think they are making their own discoveries. To urging they may be recalcitrant; to temptation they will fall. What presents itself as the cheese in the trap presents itself to the mouse will in all probability be eagerly devoured.

But here it is necessary that someone should know something about cheese. In the average

modern home that presents a difficulty. It would be an unusual father and mother who would have any preference as to what their children read, or know anything on the subject. Before the children are guided the parents have first to be converted.

There are many reasons why a large percentage of the children of to-day should be born into bookless homes, or into homes in which the habit of reading should have been almost crowded out. Ever since the general use of the telephone began to make personal communication easy we have been finding methods of relaxation quicker than that through the mind. On the telephone followed the motor car, on the motor car the movie, on the movie the radio, till reading as a pastime has become slow and staid. In the middle 'nineties a successful book ran up to a sale of half a million copies. To-day a hundred thousand is startling, while two hundred thousand is phenomenal. A falling off in the sales of books means a falling off in the number of readers. A falling off in the number of readers means a falling off in the number of those who are actively using their minds. For the value of reading above all other forms of entertainment lies in that particu-

lar, and for it there is no substitute. You cannot allow boys and girls to grow up without books, or with only such books as they use in schools, and still see them ripen into reasoning human beings. There is also no department of life in which you can more surely say, Like father, like son. Reading children come out of reading homes, and hardly ever in any other way.

We must remember, too, that the children who do not come out of reading homes are handicapped for life. Parents should make no mistake about that. I was once congratulating a father on his handsome boy and girl, respectively of fifteen and seventeen years of age. The father smiled at my praise but at once began to bemoan their backwardness at school. Both were a year behind the standard of studies, and neither prayers nor promises could wake them up. Nevertheless, to my certain knowledge of him and his wife, neither could be persuaded to take a book in their hands. A newspaper, yes; sometimes a magazine; but a book, practically never. Strangely enough it did not occur to him to connect the mental sloth of the children with that of the home with which he was surrounding them.

Of such homes there are hundreds of thou-

sands. Parents who are anxious to do for their children the highest and best possible will neglect their minds. When they send them to school they imagine they have done all for which they can be called upon. They forget that school only teaches but home educates. It takes but a little knowledge of the world to be able to discern between him who has been educated and him who has only been to school. It is not the stamp of a school or a college that a man carries to the grave, but that of the home in which he has grown up. We talk of the Harvard manner, and the Oxford manner, and the Cambridge manner as marks of cultivation, but these are only veneers. The genuine wood is the home, and what that has been you can pretty well see at a glance.

It is as true now as when Bacon first said it that if speaking maketh a ready man and writing maketh an exact man it takes reading to make a full man. The empty man betrays himself at once. There is something shallow about him, something vapid. You go through him with a look; he is little more solid than a shade. Many men highly successful in business make this impression when it comes to anything beyond their

specialties. Nothing ever disguises the unread or unfed mind.

"Read?" a lady exclaimed to me, not long ago. "I wish you had any idea of all I have to do in a day. Then you would know how much time I have to read."

And yet she has time to spend whole afternoons playing bridge and taking part in most of the gaieties of a busy suburban life.

"Read?" lads and girls just under college age have often said to me. "Why, our studies don't leave us time for anything but just to peg away at them."

And yet they will sit on piazzas and porches for hours at a stretch in silly and vacant idleness. I have sometimes wondered if the average suburban home, with its wide, shady porches, its hammocks and wicker easy-chairs, were not responsible for more wasted time than we could reckon up. Some frittering away of afternoons and evenings must be allowed to all young people, but in American communities does it not become a frittering away of intelligence? Out of our tempting verandas graduates the young man who cannot find a job because there is nothing he knows

how to do, and the girl who marries in order to get someone to give her a good time. It is a pity. So much ease and comfort provided by hard-working fathers, only to come to this! And to this it does come—to emptiness of mind, to vapidity of purpose, to vacuity of life—more often than one likes to think. Reading is not a universal panacea, but it does make a full man, with things new and old in his treasures.

And if any father or mother should want to know what sort of books to leave about the house as baits for their children expert assistance is not far to seek. Any school teacher would tell them, any librarian in a public library, any salesman in a bookstore, any clergyman, and a great many of their friends. After all, there is not much difference between books for the younger and books for the older generations, especially nowadays. Anything decent will do, but the more nearly it is classic the better. Youth reads easily when it reads at all because its imagination is readily inflamed. Most of us have seen young people deep in works which to us would be dry because they could put their hands on nothing else. Only let them put their hands on something, and you can trust them to do the rest.

At the same time, without making a burden of the matter to parent or child—it must not be forgotten that we are talking of amusement—some supervision may have to be exercised and some advice given. Even reading as a pastime should be done creatively. It should help to form the mind, to lay a foundation for the character.

For this reason too much fiction should not be provided, or too much of anything that makes no demand on the intelligence. Easy reading is excellent at times, but a continuous diet of easy reading is enfeebling to the mind. I shall have more to say on this point when we come to recreative amusement, but for the moment I wish only to point out that young people have not the same need of fiction as their elders have. The function of fiction is to stimulate the tired imagination. Under thirty or forty the average imagination is active enough. I do not say that it needs no supply of food, but it needs that supply in moderation only. When I was a boy the rule made for me was this—and I give it only because it seems to me a pretty good one—one piece of fiction and one "serious book," as we called it, alternately. If the "serious book" was very long—Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* is an instance I re-

member—we were allowed to read a story when halfway through. With Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* which I read in an edition of four volumes, we reckoned each volume as a "serious book" in itself. I will not say that the serious books were never irksome but it was carefully explained to us that because they were irksome was a reason for reading them. One read not merely to amuse one's self but to exercise the mind.

Lastly it was a rule which I followed through the years of boyhood—again I quote it only because it still strikes me as excellent—that whatever happened through the day, whatever were the chores, games, lessons, prayers, or other occupations, I must put in an hour's reading by myself. My first watch was given me so that in this duty I might measure the time. I will confess to reading often with one eye on the watch and the other on the printed page, but even so a good habit can be formed, the borders of the world can be enlarged, and material stored up in the memory that will never be forgotten.

If in these busy days an hour would be too much let it be made half an hour, or fifteen minutes, or any time at all. The end to be sought is in

mental discipline, and perhaps some curtailment of the time spent in buzzing around porches, piazzas, and verandas.

4. Perhaps on the subject of creative play no branch is more difficult to handle than that of the motion picture. As I have said elsewhere, I am one of those who look on the cinema as an inestimable blessing to mankind. It is probable that after shelter, food, sleep, our most pressing need is to keep alive the imaginative faculty, and before the coming of the movie the enormous majority of mankind had little or nothing with which to do it. Imagination being the quality which most clearly distinguishes us from the brute, large portions of the human race were scarcely above the brutish level till this matchless invention came to the rescue of their minds. To the poorest of our great cities, to slaves in the heart of Asia, to savages in Central Africa, to all of us according to our needs, it has brought a sense of a rich, stimulating, wonder-working world beyond anything we had dreamed of.

That is quite true. More might be said that would be equally true. It is not strange that every town and village in every country, and every sec-

tion and suburb of a city, should have its picture theatre, doing, I am persuaded, much more good than harm.

And yet somehow one is conscious of a screw loose. Something is wrong somewhere. The price of admission is so low that young people crowd the theatres at the rate of millions a day, while a good many thoughtful people are sorry it is so.

Why?

Perhaps the following analysis will cover the ground, the first two points being frequently noted, though I have heard less mention of the last.

(a) To the young, the inexperienced, and the ignorant the movies incline to give a false view of life. This is especially the case with the life of the more sophisticated classes, and of what are commonly called its more fashionable sets. Against a background of impossible houses, of impossible restaurants and ballrooms, cheap and flashy people move, doing impossible things. This is presented as the life of the rich. The life of the rich is pictured as radiantly different from the life of ordinary people, with a tendency to run to revelry and folly, supposed to be a condition of privilege. To hundreds of thousands of

young people this is a breeder of false standards, of foolish ambitions, of disastrous moves from small-town comfort to poverty in cities, and of other will-o'-the-wisps. It leads in a good many cases to worse than I care to say here, by bedevilling the lust of the eye.

Against this meretricious glamour it is time that some sort of warning was put up, though how it can be done it is not for me to say. It is probably a matter for individual treatment. What is harmful to one might pass over another without injury. It is chiefly a question of sanity, of keeping the head, of seeing tinsel as tinsel and not as gold lace. None the less, the danger is there, and parents who allow their children to go to the movies without discrimination should be put on their guard.

(b) Much more serious is the next point. In the course of twenty years the motion picture has made us more familiar with crime and crooks than the world has ever been before. As I have already said, our public has a liking for this sort of information. It follows violent dishonesty with that kind of interest which is almost sympathy. And as a matter of fact, the underworld has a crude fascination that few of us will deny. But it

is one thing to read of it in a book like *Oliver Twist,* and another to watch its scenes enacted beneath one's own eyes. For boys and girls such an experience can be dangerous in the extreme. Even for grown-up young men and women whose principles happen to be unsound there is in example an incitement which cannot always be allayed by precept. How much this perpetual feeding of the mind with lawlessness may be responsible for what are called our crime waves may be a question; but there is no question at all but that as a means of education through diversion it cannot but be perilous. However obviously heinous a certain course, it seems much less heinous as soon as you accustom the mind to it. Add a touch of courage, a touch of kindness, and a pinch of sentimentality, and you quickly reach the point where the thug becomes a hero.

It is a curious fact that a single mitigating courtesy on the part of a murderous highwayman will bulk larger in the imagination than all the excellencies of the ordinary citizen. Turning the pages of a magazine this very day I read as the secondary title of a story, *A Crook's Good Deed.* I did not need to look further. The crook's good deed doubtless redeemed him in the eyes of the

reader from all the horrors he had committed as a crook. Of course! just as the street walker's generous act used to win the pardon of sentimental readers for her being a street walker. To some extent the movies have changed the direction of our tender-heartedness from the prostitute to the thief.

(c) This is a grave mark against them, and the third is more serious still. Under the pretext of creative play it has given our children a familiarity with sex questions wholly premature. That this theme has been shrouded in a foolish mystery we may admit while maintaining that of all subjects in the world it is the one of which the knowledge should come most gradually. In the motion pictures it bursts on the minds of little boys and girls without the least preparation. They see with the eyes before understanding in the heart, and yet they understand in a blind instinctive way which cannot be other than a shock to their tender susceptibilities. They talk among themselves of matters which should, in all reason, be five or six years beyond them. To me personally nothing is more amazing than to hear their free use of the new verb *to vamp*. With my own ears I have heard two children talk of Mrs. A

trying to vamp Mr. B—respectable married people in the neighbourhood—discussing the pros and cons as if they were thirty years of age. The other day a mother told me that a week before she had been returning from a funeral of a little friend of her boy of ten. "Did you see Milly there?" she asked the boy, Milly being nine. "Yes," the little fellow answered, "and she tried to vamp me." A minute later he added, in an indignant tone: "Just think, Mother! Trying to vamp a fellow at a funeral!" The humour of this disapproval does not make up for the precocious loss of innocence. It is only a mental loss of innocence, of course; but that is a beginning.

That among a certain class of young men and women of good family moral conditions are horrible is a notorious fact; and one cannot but wonder if their growing up in the era of movies has not something to do with the lasciviousness they have claimed as a natural privilege. You cannot set young people in their twenties to watching lubricity in action without some counsel of "Go and do likewise" seeping into the consciousness. The war which is our scapegoat for so many of our lapses cannot have anything to do with this. Most of those of whom I speak never saw the

war, and probably grew up without hearing much about it. Yet nothing would describe the license they give themselves but old-fashioned Saxon words which we no longer print.

Even if the pictures, in the ways of which I speak, try from time to time to clean house, it is too late to undo the injuries worked through ten or fifteen years. That harm is done. "Short of turning them out of the house," a mother has recently confided to me concerning her two daughters—a mother and daughters in the "best society" let me hasten to say—"their father and I can do nothing with them." These young ladies —going in and out of the best houses, let me repeat—are living in a state of indiscriminate and unpaid harlotry, and there are thousands of others like them; and while it would be unfair to lay all the blame at the door of the movies, we cannot avoid suspecting them of much.

(d) What is the remedy? Parents can do nothing; the churches can do nothing. Conventions cast aside will never be renewed again. Law and order once gone by the board, few things are more difficult than to reëstablish them. And yet, are we to sit helplessly—and with our own children at that!—and let things go from bad to

worse? It would seem so, except for one resource. There is one thing that can save us from impotence and our children from decadence, and, as far as I can see, there is only one, and that I have invoked already.

Public opinion! Right-minded people must rise and refuse to have it so. They can. They have all the authority, all the force. If they would only not be so listless, so supine! If they would care enough! If they would be roused by a great wrath such as a man will feel over a bit of business, or a woman against her hairdresser or her dressmaker! Oh, for enough Americans who would get angry and sin not, who would lose their tempers over things that matter as violently as over bridge! The more I have studied the American people and the better I have got to know them, the more convinced I have become that there never would have been a Revolution had the colonists not been Englishmen. You can do anything to them now, and rather than bestir themselves they will let you do it. Within my own recollection, which is not that of a Methuselah even now, I have seen the whole life and character of the people change from wide freedom to relative bondage, and almost without a murmur.

It was not many years ago that I remember boasting to some Germans—I was living in Germany at the time—that as far as life in this country went we scarcely knew we had a government. We went our ways, without official papers, without police investigation, without paying any attention to the law because it sat on us so lightly that ordinary people never thought of breaking it. If we wanted to leave the country we did so without asking leave of anyone, and came back in the same way. The expenses of government were so moderate that we hardly knew we were paying taxes, and as for the cost of living, the expression had barely as yet been coined. I can still see the incredulous look on those German faces on hearing of a country in which the word liberty was not an irony, and I doubt if they believed me. To-day, when the law, with its inhibitions and prohibitions, is poking into our houses and thrusting its hands into our pockets all day long and every day, no such proud boasting would be possible.

It was at about the same epoch in the national history that a thoughtful Frenchman who was staying with me said, meditatively, one evening: "Do you know, the thing I most admire in Amer-

ica is your windows." In response to my surprise he went on to explain. Our windows were scarcely fastened. We went to bed at night leaving them so that anybody with a will could force one and get in. Then the house and family could easily be his prey, and we might all be murdered as we slept. We had no huge iron shutters as they had in France. We did not barricade ourselves. Every cottage did not need to be a citadel. A policeman strolled by once or twice through the night, and perhaps not at all by day, but otherwise we needed no protection. That was so in those days, perhaps fifteen years ago. To-day in the very same neighbourhood we have to pay detectives, in addition to the police, to watch over us at night, and keep our houses labelled with the information that we are under special care, in order that we may safely go to bed.

Liberty, security, and the honour of our women, that last stronghold of a sturdy race, have all been largely taken from us—not wholly so, thank God! for then there would be nothing left for us but to commit suicide—and still we do not get excited. When Gene Tunney knocked out Dempsey there were forty-eight hours during which the country was roused as it had hardly been since

Lincoln died. Some of us have not recovered from the shock of it even yet. We *have* emotions. Occasions of that sort prove that our hearts are not made of cork. But if that is so why cannot we use them over matters of permanent importance? I admit that Gene Tunney and Dempsey are heroes of the first national quality, but why forget that there are others, our own children, for example, who merit a little of our concern? Why ignore the fact that we have toward them tremendous moral responsibilities from which only death can relieve us? That we should see a generation growing up of which a considerable proportion are ungoverned and ungovernable while we attempt nothing to convert or control them seems to be the most callous-hearted attitude human beings could take. For their sakes, if not for our own, we should wake to the peril confronting us, and in doing that a strong public opinion is the first thing to stir.

You or I may frankly not know the wise thing to do; but there will be others who do know if we back them up. The backing up is the main thing. It is the Cause that produces the Leader, never the Leader who produces the Cause. Where there is a difficult situation, social, political, or of any

other kind, there are always those who know how to deal with it, if enough people call on them. If our young people have got out of hand, or if their amusements are not such as their more experienced elders can approve of, we need not bemoan our helplessness, neither need we antagonize those whom we love by rushing in where angels fear to tread. All we have to do is to nourish righteous wrath, till, as I have already said, we kindle someone else, and he someone else, and at last the air is aflame. Then the wise method will reveal itself with the tactful people to apply it; but till we ourselves blaze with righteous wrath nothing will be done.

(e) This may seem a strange conclusion to reflections on creative play, but the truth is that creative play has come to have a twist in it. We have to no small degree given our sons and our daughters the wrong things to play with; we have allowed them to choose their amusements for themselves till some of them have grown perverse, while some have been positively tainted. Because to so great a degree we have not watched over them and guided them—nor indeed known anything about doing either—they have lost respect for us, snapping their fingers at our wishes

and opinions. When between the two generations a bridge of affection and respect is not built in proportion as the chasm yawns, intercourse becomes little more than a harsh formality. And that bridge must be built by the parents. Its first stakes must be driven in—or whatever comes first in the building of a bridge—as soon as the baby is born. With the first blink of those sleepy baby eyes, which come trailing clouds of unsuspected wisdom from God who is our home, the hearts of both father and mother must begin to be busy. If later there come coldness, lack of confidence, disobedience, hostility, it is their fault. They have not kept up with the necessities. If sons and daughters go irretrievably wrong the blame must recoil on the parents in the first place. This is a hard saying, and there is much to be urged in contradiction to it; but fundamentally it is true. Therefore I strike this note in speaking to the generation who will probably form the bulk of my readers, if I have any at all. It is no time for saying Peace! Peace! when there is no peace. It is a time for strong measures taken by strong men and women, to whom we are giving plenty of support.

It boils itself down to this, that we do not ex-

ercise enough oversight in the creative play of our children young enough to live at home; we do not bring pressure enough to bear on those who provide them with such amusements as the movies; we do not assure ourselves that they read enough privately—and I am pleading for no more than a few minutes in the day, if that is all that can be given—so that they may use their minds; we do not guard them sufficiently against loafing, idleness, and empty-headedness; we do not make certain that they take all the exercise they need.

Of these deficiences on our parts I am inclined to rate the last as the first, and I am thinking most of the adolescent ages. For really young boys and girls runabout games of the "tag" order, as well as the Boy and Girl Scout movements, cover the ground sufficiently. But there comes a time when lads and young women outgrow these helps—lads especially—and just at the age when a great deal of exercise is most imperative.

As far as I am able to judge, which perhaps is not very far, we lack in this country such local organizations for games as the English have in their cricket and football clubs, and, in the country in particular, their many ways of following

hounds on foot. We have some such clubs, to be sure, but they do not bulk large in the social life of a community. In England there is not a village so small as to be without its cricket and football teams, of which the members are chosen from all social classes without discrimination. When I was last in that country a few years ago I was lunching with some friends in Dorset, but the host, who incidentally was the squire, was absent because he was playing cricket against a team from another part of the county. On the eleven there were besides the squire, a curate, a young lord, a son of the rector, the rest being young men of the village, with the butcher as captain of them all. We had not quite finished luncheon, when our host arrived, but he would eat nothing, having already lunched with his own and the visiting team in a tent on the cricket field. Multiplied and remultiplied all over the United Kingdom, these games give an opportunity for exercise to which, as far as my knowledge goes, we have no parallel. Neither have we fishing, shooting, golf, or tennis, except for the relatively rich. Some skating there is, some swimming, some camping, and in big cities a few gymnasiums which meet a small part of the need. But for enormous numbers

of young men sport means nothing but to "root" as spectators at professional ball games. This is not enough for healthy young manhood. In the creative play of the country there is a great empty place which needs to be filled. Millions of adolescents have hardly any resource for their hours of leisure but to crowd into some rattletrap of a car and let the devil drive them. How he drives them we read in all our papers.

I have often wondered if a good end might not be served if some of our philanthropists who leave millions to universities, art galleries, and hospitals, were to cut down on these beneficences, useful as they are, to supply the cities with more of the means of releasing energy on the part of young fellows for whom scarcely anything is done at all. More gymnasiums, more swimming pools, baseball fields better than vacant lots half-strewn with empty cans, tennis courts, golf links, country clubs of a modest kind and at modest fees, anything in short which offers a means of sweating the body to a healthy fatigue, so that the mind will work away from the fascination of the hold-up, while the hand comes off the gun. True, we have already made such experiments to a mild parochial degree. We have the Y. M. C. A. and

the Y. M. H. A. and the K. of C. and a few kindred fellowships, which do much good. But I mean something more simply based on the grounds of a broad humanity, something in which there will be neither pastor, rabbi, nor priest, something self-governing perhaps, like a George Junior Republic, masculine, coarse if you like, but a spot in which the hobbledehoy of the factory, the workshop, and the streets, so neglected as he often is, so much a social outlaw, will not be too shy to go and exorcise the devil of the flesh, so that all he asks is a bed on which to sink exhausted. What would be the result of that? It might not be money thrown away if some rich man would help the world to make the experiment and see.

VI

B. Recreative differs from creative play chiefly in being more mature. Its resources are much the same: exercise, hobbies, reading, the theatre, social life. The diversions of social life may take a larger place, but beyond that the difference is mainly in attitude of mind.

When one's eye is not watching the clock it is afternoon before we are aware of it. Forty comes

and there is not much difference between that and thirty-nine. There was not much difference between thirty-nine and thirty-eight, nor between thirty-eight and thirty-seven, and so we can work backward. But there is a perceptible difference between forty and thirty, just as there was the same between thirty and twenty. Not without reason, physical as well as mental, do biologists place the turning point at two score, or thereabouts.

From forty onward a man becomes able to take a more serious view of himself, and almost instinctively takes it. His outlook shifts before he himself is aware of it. Unless it does so the survival of too marked a youthfulness in point of view will stamp him as fatuous and silly. Here I must not be misunderstood as referring to that beautiful characteristic, to which we referred in speaking of the open mind, whereby men remain young while advancing into maturity; not that at all; but there are people who do not mature, who even at fifty and sixty have a certain callowness. The climacteric comes and leaves them as they were, incapable of ripening.

But men and women like this are the exceptions. With normal folk there comes a time when

they see that their point of view is changing. Children, for one thing, begin to grow up, and increasing parental responsibility brings the first foreshadowing of age. Then physical energies are less active, though the mind awakes to greater freshness. Subjects which had slighter interest in the earlier years—politics, finance, literature sometimes, and religion very often—insensibly claim a larger share of the thought. Then it is that the character which has been nebulously forming all through childhood, adolescence, and young manhood and womanhood, begins to be solidly laid down and recognized.

This brings us to the subject of reflection. Perhaps I was wrong not to include reflection among recreative pastimes. And yet it is not a pastime; it has nothing in common with the game at which we play for a while and then put away. Once give reflection a chance and she becomes the faithful companion of every minute of the second half of life, and a most endearing one. Youth has nothing to equal her, nothing so simply the dispenser of wisdom, charity, and peace. All we need do is to give her an entry and she will come in. She will come in so easily, so pleasantly, and with so little fuss that we do not know that she is there

till she is at work with us. A man who reflects is bending a subject and bending it again to get different lights on it. And always the light is from outside, the light of the sun, the light of the moon, the light of the mind. They fall and illuminate, with a new beauty here and a new idea there, according as we turn and turn our material. Doing this adds a new joy to life, and a joy which fills in all sorts of odd minutes, all sorts of idle hours and empty days, when otherwise we might feel burdened with sorrow, worried by care, or merely tired or bored.

The capacity to reflect is one of maturity's advantages. Of these there are many. It is worth while to remember that in proportion as we grow older life becomes richer, fuller, and more varied. I should like to lay some emphasis on this for the reason that the beauty of growing old is rarely quite perceptible to most of us. Most of us, I think, see life as an expanding process up to the age of forty, let us say, after which it turns inward and begins to contract. The very opposite of this should be the case. Each year should find us with a wider experience, a riper judgment, a keener and readier power of enjoyment. Youth with its

perplexities, its anxieties, its many unsettled questions, is the worried time. As we move forward we grow more serene. We have learned something of the art of bearing things. Humility, meekness, patience have taught us a little at least of their fortitude. If physical strength declines the strength of the spirit grows, and in any life it is that which really counts. Bodily infirmities are largely counteracted by a wider and freer mind, while happiness is understood in terms of victory rather than in those of temporal satisfactions.

But this depends, of course, mainly on point of view. We can stand up to the years and welcome them, knowing that each as it comes brings us some new enrichment, or we can cringe before them in dread of what they are taking away. We all know men and women who are doing either one of these things or the other. Women especially are cowards at the thought of time, regarding it as an enemy. In reality it is enemy or friend, as we choose to make it, but it is a friend more naturally than it is an enemy. It depends on what we ourselves permit. If it breaks down the temporal and passing it builds up the spiritual and

permanent. It will not do the former without also doing the latter if we ourselves do not stand in the way. A happy, useful, active old age is within the reach of most of us, only it must be prepared for in advance. It must be met from afar. With each new birthday in the forties, fifties, and sixties, we must see the years broadening, not narrowing. We must make them broaden by our way of looking ahead. Where other things fail, as fail they will, we must fill the empty places with thought. Thought is a great comforter, a great means of compensation, the great method of transmutation. There is hardly anything that life can take away which thought will not keep on supplying in some other form. Therefore it is that I plead so constantly for the use of the mind, for a broad and generous attitude of mind, for whatever will make the thought eager, ready, and responsive.

1. Fortunately our ways of taking exercise as we enter on our third score of years permit of a good deal of thinking. I need not characterize them further than to say that they are as a rule the quieter ways, the less physically active, in which staid men play staid games in which there is more of the walking of the golf links than the

leaping of the tennis court. That is sufficient to establish my point.

At the same time it must be remembered that, according to biologists, the climacteric brings with it a need of exercise not less imperative than that of adolescence. Life has reached its second stage. Something has been lived through, and in a sense completed. To go on with it involves a measure of monotony. Much that we have enjoyed has lost its novelty, and novelty is the spice of life. The roving eye begins to look about it. The roving heart begins to feel a sense of restlessness. The imagination after a long period of calm knows a time of recrudescence. For both men and women there comes a straining at the leash, and it is wholly a question of character as to how fierce that straining is to be. It will test the character that up to the present has been formed; it will determine the character of the future. For marriage in particular this is a dangerous time, and married people should be kept aware of it. Though I have no statistics by which to go, I venture the guess that the majority of divorces have their origin around this time of life. A day comes, sometimes for a man, sometimes for a woman, when neither home nor chil-

dren count against the wildness of some new call.

It is prosaic to say that to men especially—I cannot speak for women—plenty of exercise can act as a safeguard against perils that have been but partially foreseen, if foreseen at all; but good healthy fatigue is a wonderful corrective to a wandering fancy. Not only does it calm the mind, but it gives the body all it can cope with for at least a few hours. It is the slothful or sedentary man who becomes most easily a prey to the lust of the eye, and often he cuts a poor figure. What can be condoned at twenty-five must be regarded more severely at forty-five, while at fifty-five and sixty-five it is generally nothing but an old fool's folly. Even in this ignoble case it will generally be found that good wholesome exercise over green grass and in the fresh air diverts the imagination from what it had better not dwell upon. As a re-charging of the inner dynamo it cannot but be healthily re-creative.

Men who do hard manual work get this, of course, in their labour. It is one of the reasons, perhaps, why we hear less of the roving eye among them than in circles higher up. To them the climacteric brings another form of trial in which, I fear, not enough is ever done to warn or

shield them. Think of the vast army of workers who have won their eight-hour day but who have not won anything in particular to do with their long leisure. They come home each afternoon from a day's work atrophying to the mind and have no escape from the tenement but the street corner. No wonder the saloon was a club which many of them found inviting. No wonder that since its suppression the natural craving for excitement has broken out in other ways, often more reprehensible.

Another class for whom more might be done is the army of salesmen, clerks, and bookkeepers, men who make anywhere from twenty-five to fifty dollars a week, and whose salaries permit of little or no margin after living expenses have been paid. It is true that the Young Men's Christian, Hebrew, and Catholic Associations try to meet the recreative needs of just this class, but they cannot provide for so many, in addition to which what they offer is mostly indoors. Here are men with exactly the same physical, mental, and emotional needs as those who can join riding clubs, play polo, golf, and tennis, and run off when they choose to Bermuda or Palm Beach. In an improved society some provision along

such lines as I have hinted at will also be made for these, perhaps the least considered and the most deserving class in any country.

As a matter of fact, philanthropy is too stereotyped. It runs too much into moulds. The rich man in making his will can think only of an art gallery or a college. These are all very well, but human needs are varied and many of them are overlooked. In the city where I live, a few years ago a wealthy woman in dying left her suburban estate, some three hundred acres and a commodious house, to a working girls' club. The girls own it, and run it as any country club is run, only on a scale commensurate with their means. It is near enough to the city for them to spend the day there, returning to their homes at night, while it offers space for longer sojourns to members who wish to spend a few days there. With the usual outdoor summer amusements as well as winter sports, there are no words in which to express the infusion of joy and health which thus enters into the lives of girls who would otherwise have no refuge from the narrow home or the rooming house but the dance hall or the street. This is an illustration of what I mean. All over the country there are great houses which

prove nothing but white elephants on the hands of those who ultimately become heirs to them, and which could be put to some such use as this as easily as not. Again let us hope that the time may come when generous souls will think of doing so.

2. It stands to reason that as the middle years come on the attitude toward reading should gradually change, and that books should take a more important place in life. When they do not it may be safely assumed that something is wrong and that the mind is not being used as it should be. A man supposedly intelligent who does not read wears of necessity a stupid air among his friends. Though the talk may never turn on books, his air is stupid all the same. But as most people do read something at least, it becomes important for all of us, as the serious years come on, to know what and why we read, and to read more or less on principle. Not only do we owe this to ourselves; we owe it also to the children growing up in our houses, and to whom our example is far more impressive than our precept.

(a) It used to be the case, with the average busy man and woman, that the error most difficult to overcome was that at the end of the day, when we generally get our leisure, we were too

tired to read anything but the lightest. There never was a greater fallacy. That a student should say this, or a writer, or one who was constantly using the intellectual functions of the brain, was comprehensible, though probably they never would; but for the average business man, the average woman occupied by her housekeeping, it was foolish. What rests the mind is to work some other part of it. The mind does not rest in doing nothing; it only rusts. To be clear and bright it must be active, and to be active it must have something to wrestle with. Very light reading has its place as an interlude; but more than as an interlude it is like a perpetual diet of whipped white of egg.

Luckily the tired business man is disappearing. Never more than a figment of the American mind, since there was never any reason for the business man being any more tired than any other man who was using his faculties to the utmost, you do not hear much of him now unless it be in the rural districts, where superstitions are slow to die. In the cities the curse that he laid on creative effort has largely lost its spell, and the mind has a freedom of play which in America is rela-

tively new. This is a relief. From creative and recreative effort an embargo seems to be removed. Books are published and plays are given which actually require a mind for their appreciation. Any librarian or bookseller will tell us now that during the last ten years the demand for books has steadily risen toward those of a higher order. This being the case it may be worth while to point out here the function of that kind of literature most widely read as a pastime toward the development of character.

(b) The oldest intellectual prompting we possess is the love of telling or listening to a tale. That instinct was the beginning of literature. It shows itself in the child as soon as he can manifest the possession of a mind; it never dies in the man. Many pictures have been drawn for us of the primitive camp fire, round which all generations are gathered, eagerly attentive, while the story-teller with graphic gestures and gleaming eyes relates the legends as ancient as man.

But even then there were those to whom they made less appeal than they did to others. Outside the group, sitting with their backs to the fire, there would be a little knot of three or four, per-

haps, watching the mystery of the stars, pointing out to one another how some of them formed pictures such as they themselves drew in caves, here of the great curved back of an animal, possibly a bear, there of the figure of a man, belted, and standing with his feet apart, and there of a cascade of milk. They would discuss the rising and the setting of the sun, with the lengthening and shortening of the days; the rising and the setting of the moon, with the strange corresponding phenomena of tides. Even to them, wise as they were in comparison to the beasts, standing so to speak at the apex of civilization, there were still wonders to be fathomed and discoveries to be made. A tale was a vain, passing thing when there were such marvels to explore.

These two types of mind still persist and will probably go on forever. They result from two stages of the imagination. When the imagination is full and active little in the way of fiction is required. On the other hand, when it is tired or starved it is greedy for stimulation. For the mind occupied with science, invention, discovery, pioneering, and the creative side of business, one novel in a year, one novel in five or ten years, will often be enough. This is not saying one book, but

one novel. The man who has come to the recreative years will consider this and adjust himself.

Let it be laid down as an axiom of life that whatever his occupation every man must read. He must read not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his children, employees, and friends. He cannot afford to lower himself in their eyes, or to cut a foolish figure. They may not know he does not read, but they will divine in him something below the par of manhood. Even when we do not read ourselves we recognize this lack in other men, though we may not be able to ascribe it to its cause. The illiterate have this power of discernment as well as the more sophisticated. "That man who has just left this chair," a barber once said to me, "must read every book that's written. And he reads them just for fun. He's not a professor. He's a glove manufacturer." The tribute was offered with an awe and admiration he did not give to many of his customers.

And if we must read it is obvious that we should make our choice of reading matter as high as possible. Here I must try not to be didactic or set before the average American who is not a scholar anything likely to be beyond his reach. These lines are written for simple people only,

and, oddly enough, just as I am in the middle of this paragraph, I find these words in the *Atlantic Monthly* which came out to-day:

"It is as permissible to read for entertainment or for escape or even to kill time as it is to use the movies, bridge, or solitaire for a like purpose. Ruskin himself makes ample allowance for firm fact telling and portrayal of contemporary life. And there is the further consideration, developed by Mr. Balfour and by the late Mr. Payne in an essay on hypocrisy in literature, and abused by the new pedagogy, that we sometimes like to be fed from a low crib, and that we learn more from, and may be more stimulated by, the literature that is nearer the habitual tone and level of our own thoughts. We cannot always breathe on the heights; even Lowell once wrote: 'The Grecian gluts me with its perfectness.' Supreme literature sometimes affects us as the marbles of the Parthenon did Keats:

> "My spirit is too weak, mortality
> Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep.

"But, all these allowances granted, it remains true that lifelong habituation to the winnowed and sifted best of the world's literary inheritance brings its sure and ever acceleratingly increased reward in the clarification of our ideas, the ennobling of feeling, the refinement of sentiment,

and the self-companionship of a mind stored with high thoughts and gracious and beautiful images."

With this proviso, that we aim at the highest which we as individuals are capable of reaching —and even a little higher—let us return to the point we began to consider, as to how far the man of mature years may give himself to the reading of fiction, and how much he had better abstain from it.

The question is not difficult to answer, in that the reader has the answer in himself. If he lacks a book and craves a novel, a novel is what he ought to read. If on finishing that one he craves another let him read another, and another after that. So long as his imagination is parched and thirsty, imaginative reading will be what he needs. But let him watch himself. We need just so much of anything and not a whit more. More when we do not need it spoils the appetite and creates aversion. Some amount of fiction everyone must have; but too much is enfeebling to the mind. A good novel now and then is a rest, a refreshment; it gives us new outlooks; it freshens the point of view. But novel after novel indefi-

nitely, as many people read them, forgetting to-day the plot of the one read yesterday, that is worse than never to open a book. Reading is like eating; variety must minister to taste.

The reader of English is fortunate in having to his hand perhaps the finest assortment of novels in any literature. Not only has he the superb library of American fiction, but he has a Scotch, an Irish, and an English one all equally rich. There is no reason why any of us should sit down to a really poor book unless we have been mistaken or deceived. Tastes differ, of course; and what will delight one will not always please another; but as a rule the reader who wishes to aim high and take fiction at its best need have no difficulty in doing so. Even the novels of the hour, for sale on the counters, and not yet stored on the shelves, are often very good, some of them quite equal to those we now call classic. As a matter of fact, most of the classics are classics not because of their excellence, but because of having been written at a time when there was little competition and everything stood out. But whatever the causes the reader of English is rich in things to read.

VII

All the more strange is it then that, with a perversity hard to explain, he should so often take to the crime novel as the kind of reading he likes best. I am told that within the past ten years publishers can hardly keep pace with the demand for stories which have some deed of violence as the centre of the plot. Generally it is a murder, or a mysterious robbery. Among the many characters —some of them calling down suspicion on themselves as obviously as the Russian adventuress in an old-fashioned melodrama—which is the guilty one? There is the conundrum the innocent reader is put up against, and experience never teaches him. It is none of the fierce protagonists between whom his suspicions shift; it is the insignificant poor relation who creeps in and out so quietly that you never notice her—or else it is one of the detectives. This is the choice usually offered us, and the extraordinary thing is that it never seems to satiate. A man will finish a detective yarn before he goes to bed and in the morning begin on another which differs from the last as little as the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" differs from the tune of "God Save the King."

On the development of character I am convinced that this has an injurious effect. We all know men who outside of the newspaper can read scarcely anything but detective fiction, such as it is. To-day, on going into the bookstore to buy the *Atlantic Monthly* from which I have just quoted, I saw the window filled with bindings of lurid colouring, in the centre of which was a card bearing in large letters the startling name of the Crime Club. In the shop I asked the meaning of the name, receiving the information that the Crime Club was a new book club which undertook to supply to its subscribers the best book of the month on crime. I am telling this at the risk of advertising the club's business, because in a country fighting against crime for its life it seems so appalling.

Were this particular Crime Club—there may be hundreds in the country for aught I know—down in those depths of the city where the criminal classes mostly segregate themselves it might not seem so monstrous; but it is situated close to the finest "residential section" of one of our historic cities, within sight of two of the most famous churches in the United States, near a large

university and a model public library. No district in America could be more respectable. The bookshop itself has a really cultivated clientèle.

Let me quote from the prospectus, on the scarlet cover of which a black silhouette points a revolver at someone unseen:

"Woodrow Wilson said, 'There is nothing I would rather do after a hard day of work than follow some imaginary criminal through a network of obstacles to his final capture.' Theodore Roosevelt always liked a good detective story. Prime Minister Baldwin of England reads the newest thrillers. These are a few of many famous cases. Take down a copy of Who's Who, the Social Register, the Statesman's Yearbook, the list of any distinguished group of men and women. More than half the intelligent men and women in the country—by actual survey of the bookstores—are mystery story readers. More than that, they are *regular* mystery story readers eagerly awaiting the next good book that comes along. In the Crime Club you will be a fellow member with some of the most distinguished people in the world."

This, I think, would probably be true. There are reasons for believing that the public for the

crime novel, even more than for the sex novel, consists of the pick of American readers. When I say that I am not speaking of reading a rattling detective story now and then—even though I myself find it hard to keep up with the real ones in the newspapers—but of that perpetual steeping of the mind in criminality which acts as an opiate. It is this opiate which forms the peril of the society in which we live. I repeat that it is more dangerous than the crime itself. It is drugging the American character into an indifference between public right and wrong which it will be next to impossible ever to shake off. A few exciting stories, of no high order at the best, are not worth this terrific price.

A few weeks ago a man was acquitted by a petit jury in the District of Columbia after, as I understand it, having been unanimously declared guilty by the Supreme Court of the United States. But was there any public outcry? Not a bit of it. The case had been six years before the country, and the country apparently was tired of it. The verdict came to a public that was so busy hearing about crime, reading about crime, and—what is worst of all—*imagining* about crime, that it is really crime obsessed. With a

cynical laugh it has shrugged its shoulders, saying, "You can't convict a million dollars," and let it go at that.

"The colouring of our imaginations," let me again quote from the article in the *Atlantic Monthly* which I have cited already, "by the images on which we allow our minds to dwell is more than a metaphor. The text that bids us think on whatsoever things are just, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report, may not have been precisely so intended, but it is applicable here. Yet, under the specious texts of realism, verity, facing the facts, and the scientific attitude, the most widely advertised literature of to-day is accustoming a whole generation to brood persistently on whatsoever things are cynical, unjust, hideous, squalid, and of ill report."

American men and women coming into the serious years will never shape their characters to what we have a right to expect of them till they have taken these things most deeply into consideration.

(c) The point from which we seem to have departed, though we have really been keeping close to it, is that the person to whom plenty of fiction may be allowed is the man or woman whose work is of a routine, unimaginative order,

and with whom that particular faculty is easily exhausted. For this reason women, whose duties have been so largely in certain rounds, housework, teaching, sewing, selling behind counters, and similar tasks, have been avid novel readers, and rightly so. Now that their lives have broadened I believe it is an actual fact that they read fiction less, and science, biography, and history more. With a conscientious mind it is something that takes care of itself, but only when the mind is conscientious. They say that a baby knows instinctively what it ought to eat; well, so do we know instinctively what we ought to read. If we do not, then the rule I have cited as made for me in boyhood will perhaps be found as good as any—one novel and one work of a more serious nature alternately. It is rough and ready, but it works well enough for most simple readers, as well as for boys and girls. After all, it is character we are in search of; and character will be best developed in the society of the world's "winnowed and sifted best."

VIII

It is in the theatre, I think, that men and women if the recreative years must feel the strongest

sense of responsibility. This is natural enough, because of all the methods of recreative art the theatre is the most vivid. In reading a book the imagination has to supply the whole faculty of sight; in looking at a motion picture the spectator must instantly summarize the dialogue. The stage supplies both, the only tax it puts on the audience being to supply the probable incidents lived through during entr'actes. It therefore comes nearer the action of real life than any other form of recreative entertainment.

Its effect is for that reason the acutest. What is once seen and heard in a theatre rarely passes altogether from the memory. It cuts deep; it holds fast. Among people who go seldom, and among young people especially, the impression made by a play is one of the most lasting in life.

All the more reason then why it should not be pernicious. I shall make no attempt to define this term, preferring to leave it vague. My subject is not the theatre; it is character. Only as it affects character do I speak of the theatre at all. But since it does affect character, and almost from every angle, there are one or two things about it which I feel I ought to say.

These will be entirely from the point of view

of the spectator in the middle years, who cannot doff his mind when he changes to a dinner jacket and go mindless to sit in the stalls. That mental attitude belonged to the day of the tired business man, now happily at rest. Nowadays the theatre invites you to take your intelligence with you. You are asked to consider problems and see slices of life and go away with something to think about. This is excellent, and to a great degree the theatre makes good the invitation. There probably never was a time when the larger cities offered us so many good plays to choose from, or plays so well performed. So much has been written on these points by competent critics of the drama that for me to lay it down as the foundation of what I have to say will be enough.

For it puzzles me not a little that in proportion as the theatre has developed in grasp of its material and method of presenting it, it should also have taken on a grossness unknown a few years ago. This is something which men and women in the thinking years cannot overlook. To them the theatre cannot be merely a place of amusement; it must of necessity be something of a social institution. It does not work in a vacuum; it has bearings on the life of a community. From the rich

people in the boxes to the gods in the gallery every individual submits more or less to its fascination. When the actors and actresses come-off the stage and appear in the streets they are objects of interest as even important members of society rarely are. The overtones and influences thrown out by plays and players justifies on the part of grown men and women a concern which we do not feel for any other profession or its work.

Here let me say that I am not prudish, and have not to my knowledge a single puritanical interest. I lived much in Paris in my younger years, and enjoyed many a rollicking Palais Royal farce. I have long been of the opinion that the average human being, of the male sex especially, can stand a good deal of genial coarseness and be none the worse for it. But there is a time and place for everything, and many things can pass in the smoking room of an ocean liner which would not be appropriate were a master to narrate them to his class in Groton or St. Paul's.

This is a principle of social life which cannot be gainsaid since it is based on everything we know as common sense. Theatrical people acknowledge it as promptly as everyone else once there is no question of the box office. But the

minute there is they treat us as if we were all of one age and sex, with no distinctions to be made between toughened men and women of the world and boys and girls in their teens. They spring on us *grossièretés* and *énormités*—we have never till recently needed an equivalent for these words in English—for which a large number of us are wholly unprepared. In copying from the French —for the inspiration for this sort of thing comes from the plain-spoken Gallic theatre—they forget, or perhaps they have never known, that in France there are two kinds of performances, one to which old and young go together, and another for people of an age supposed to be able to stand anything. On no consideration would the French sense of the fitness of things allow young people to listen to the profanities and obscenities quite commonly heard from the stage in New York and elsewhere in America. It is not that boys and girls do not know such allusions and expressions —young people are supposed to know everything nowadays—but there is such a thing as natural human decency which forbids the bandying of certain terms between the generations. It is like a repetition of the sin of Ham, the son of Noah, in revenge for which, according to the legend, he

and all his descendants were smitten black. It engenders a very special sense of shame.

To show better what I mean let me give a concrete example. To the city where I live there came a month or two ago a play which had had a triumphant season in New York. Having in a general way heard much to its credit, and being an enthusiastic admirer of the great actress who carried the piece on her own shoulders, I hastened to take seats. For reasons which I need not give they were for a Saturday matinée, and the audience was much what one expects on such occasions. There was a small sprinkling of men, perhaps fifteen or twenty in all, a considerable number of complacent suburban mothers, and hundreds of schoolgirls, neatly legged, short-skirted, stunted in growth, and looking so much alike that they seemed to have been spawned in thousands upon thousands rather than born as individuals.

The play, let me say, was a good enough play as plays go, but it had this special feature, that from the minute of the entry of the heroine up to the final curtain it was garnished by a succession of *énormités* such as I do not remember ever before to have heard from English-speaking lips.

Practically all were uttered by the heroine—one of the most charming of modern artists, let me hasten to repeat, if you searched the world over—and for fear you might lose one of them she half covered her eyes as she uttered each, looking out roguishly between her fingers and suppressing her own laughter. All had to do with intimate details of the married state, and few could be repeated in an officers' mess without calling forth a reprimand that such language was unbecoming a gentleman.

Now, on this I have no comment to make. Anything I might say would be too obvious. What impressed me that afternoon, what is still ringing in my ears, is the high shrill cackle of the little girls. Its comprehending immaturity was not short of diabolical. That little girls should know the meaning of such marital innuendo and should shriek over it like a thousand cats at night was enough to make the blood run cold in a grown man's veins. And twice a week special matinée trains brought more of them in from the suburbs to repeat this same experience. It would be so in the next town to which the piece moved on, and the next, and the next, till the country was covered, a dreadful debauch of the very in-

nocence a nation instinctively wishes to keep purest. And not only that, but other plays would come and do the same. In the theatre of the day indecency, immodesty, profanity, vulgarity are everywhere and still are as likely as not to take you by surprise.

This is a situation as to which probably the majority of people in the middle years are much perturbed. They feel that many of the leaders in the theatre, playwrights and producers especially, are not keeping faith with them. After all, those of us who for the sake of our children wish to make and keep the country worthy of respect must be the greater number. The theatrical people bid for our money without which they could not go on. Then when we have paid it they treat us, perhaps six times out of ten, to salacious stuff such as few of us ever hear outside the seats in a playhouse. We do not always mind for ourselves, but we do mind for our children. People of the theatre know as well as anybody else how hard it is for us to keep them straight, and yet they will deliberately ensnare them for a gain of so much a head.

This sounds something like a helpless wail, and so it is. It is helpless because those who do the

wailing and make the complaints have everything in their own hands and yet are incapable of united action. We have no public opinion, and no public opinion seems likely to be formed. Indifference weighs on us like mortality on Keats. "I've heard so much worse on the stage," said a lady to me in reference to the play I have spoken of above, "that it didn't shock me." "It didn't shock me either," I returned, "as far as I was personally concerned; but what about those hundreds of young girls?" "Oh, you can't teach *them* anything that they haven't known long ago, so why worry on that score?" And there we are! With some of us indignant and all of us indolent, any sort of force would ride roughshod over us were it not for the occasional interference of the police. We have come to that, it seems to me. When the police do not save us from our sins we are in danger of being lost.

IX

It must not be supposed that the points I have considered as to recreative play are meant to be an exhaustive survey of the subject. Exercise, reading, and the theatre cover too little ground for that. All they can attempt to do is to stand for

those aspects of recreation behind which lies something of a moral motive. In the end it sums itself up as no more than the copybook maxim of the right use of time. A mind, a genuine mind, that is to say, does not want to kill time or to waste it any more than can be helped. The best entertainment will often be found in a change of occupation. This is not a hard-and-fast rule. There are moments when to do nothing at all is the most delicious of refreshments, but even then the mind will be working, though perhaps unconsciously. Nevertheless, it is true that a change of occupation recreates us best, and the more an occupation has a purpose within it the more effective it will be.

There, I think, we have it in a nutshell. To live with some sort of purpose is the only way to live at all. Too many of us live by chance. We get up in the morning with no motive beyond that of the daily necessities, our only programme being to take what comes. What comes has for us no significance and no after effects. We gossip in clubs, we listen to "talks" which pass in one ear and out the other, we spend hours playing bridge, just to get rid of as much of the day as we can annihilate, and never stop to think that time should always

leave some little good behind it. Even before forty this can begin to grow evident; after forty it should be a principle as clear as the sun in the heavens.

Autumn is the harvest time, and how glorious it is! Spring is tender, full of inspiration; summer is hot and fructifying, with no more to be sown and little as yet to reap; but with fall come the grains, the fruits, and all the richest flowers. It is the time of fulfilment, when the inner life can be most serene and the spirit goes on broadening.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER AND SOCIAL LIFE

I

AS A force in the building of character social life dates in general to the Renaissance and less vaguely to that evolution of the home which began in France with the first of the Valois, Francis I, and in England with the first of the Tudors, Henry VII. It is a curious fact that the same process should have been so nearly contemporaneous in both countries, and from practically the same cause.

The cause was the reunion of France after long vicissitude of possession, and of England after civil war. In France the French rulers of England, Normans and Plantagenets, had long held this or that province, this or that fortress, till driven out by Jeanne d'Arc. Even so, Burgundy and Brittany were both independent, acknowledging but a shadowy fealty to the king in Paris. All this had been overcome, and when Francis married his distant relative, Claude de

France, the last of the House of Capet, a united France appeared for the first time in history.

Something similar, though not identical, had been taking place in England. There, on the extinction of the main line of the House of Plantagenet, the throne was seized by the Duke of Lancaster, a member of a junior branch, who reigned as Henry IV. Followed by his son, Henry V, and he by his son, Henry VI, there ensued the Wars of the Roses, till the line of York was enthroned in the person of Edward IV. He was succeeded by his son Edward V, one of the "little Princes in the Tower," and he by his hunchbacked uncle Richard III, who was slain by Henry Tudor, in whose veins ran Plantagenet blood. Having married Elizabeth, heiress of the House of York, Henry Tudor proclaimed himself king as Henry VII, and so there was again a united England.

But in the meantime, in spite of all the inconveniences of disunion and civil war, there was born that dominating thing which to-day we know as business. Before business there had been barter, trade, commerce, all relatively simple and elementary. Business means import and export, of course, but it means them with a complexity

unknown in Europe before the days of the Valois and the Tudors. Catherine de' Medici, the commanding figure of her age in France, was the granddaughter of a banker; Queen Elizabeth had the modern commercial instincts in embryo —the first business woman to mount a throne. With business came in the middle classes, and with the middle classes something like what we have since come to know as a home.

A home implied a house. Domestic architecture appeared in both countries about the same time. Hitherto there had been no need for it. The great nobles housed their families in fortresses; for those who were not great nobles a hovel, windowless, chimneyless, with a mud floor and loft like that of a stable, was good enough. In the towns the wealthier tradesmen allowed themselves more luxury, but not much. Where there was luxury there was also the danger, almost the certainty, of robbery. The only class not noble who dared to instal themselves in splendour were the clergy and the religious orders.

Of anything like our modern comfort there was of course no sign. Chimneys and windows were introduced only in the teeth of the fiercest opposition. The common people looked on them

as dangerous to health; the clergy preached against them as softening innovations perilous to morals. Even though houses, not unlike our own, were in course of building, furnishings were still primitive. A few tables, benches, and stools; a few chests; a few pallets to be thrown as beds on the floors. The floors were strewn with rushes which were renewed only once a year. In the main hall, which served as living room and dining room, all discarded food was thrown among the rushes to be eaten by the dogs. What the dogs wouldn't eat was left to rot. A Spanish ambassador in describing to his sovereign a banquet given at the Guildhall to Queen Elizabeth tells of the thousands of roses strewn on the floors and garlanded on the walls to counteract the stench from previous feasts. Though they had besoms made of the broom plant, sweeping, apparently, did not occur to them. Cleanliness, ventilation, sanitation were words without a meaning to civilized mankind for a good hundred years after he had gained possession of a decent private house.

The decent private house was long without amenities. Perhaps the first faint touch of anything like that was given when stools and benches were made with a good stout bar between the

front legs to keep the feet from the reek on the floor. Then with the same end in view a pallet was raised on a wooden framework which became known as a bedstead. A bedstead being a clumsy piece of furniture to move, bedrooms followed of necessity. A little ingenuity was also beginning to soothe the hard lot of the housekeeper. For linen, napery, and clothes there was only a chest, which necessitated the moving of many things when but one thing was sought. Someone had the idea of a chest with a drawer in it, so that articles not in constant use could be left undisturbed. This was so successful that a second drawer was added, and a third and a fourth, till presently was evolved a whole chest of drawers. Forks came into use, and knives more elegant for the table than the dirks men carried in their sheaths. Fathers and mothers began to arrogate to themselves the comfort of chairs with backs, hitherto the privilege of kings and queens and bishops. Not till the age of Chippendale and the other great English cabinet makers did chairs with backs come freely into use for all the members of a family, while in France the distinction between the *tabouret* and the *fauteuil,* the stool and the armchair, has but recently lost its signifi-

cance in drawing rooms. But the process is clear. One thing was added to another till, by the time of Louis XIV in France and of his relative Queen Anne in Great Britain, conditions were developed which allowed, on the part of people of comparatively humble degree, the emergence of something in the way of social life. Its setting had first to be prepared for it, and that had only happened by the time when Fielding, Fanny Burney, and, later, Jane Austen, began to write. The novel was in fact the first great outcome of the new era's progress in art.

II

But not till the middle of the Nineteenth Century did we begin to speak of society, in the sense of the free intercourse between men and women, in either the wider or the narrower sense. For this there was a reason partly mechanical, partly economic.

The economic reason was that until there was plenty of money there could be no such social development as we now know as "entertaining." Up to the time of the great industrial movement that process had been chiefly what its name implies, something intellectual. An *entretien* was a

conversation only, and generally took place in a salon. Refreshments being light the cost was trivial. This suited a nation of good talkers like the French, who for generations made it their chief social activity. With the English, and later with the Americans, the modest *entretien* became more and more elaborate, more and more expensive, till with the great fortunes in both countries which began to accumulate after the Civil War there was scarcely a limit to display. Social life took on a magnificence such as it had never before attained to, and is still, as a whole, in its glory.

This is social life in that most contracted form, which is wholly dependent on money. In a wider aspect, that of the free association of men and women, the mainspring had to be mechanical. Till the building of railways and steamers, with the easier movement from place to place, that association was limited. Men moved about more freely than women did. With little or no trouble they could ride from one part of a county to another, while to a woman, with a house and children on her mind, perhaps, such a jaunt was no small undertaking. That with the lack of means of transportation she ever went away from home was in itself a wonder.

For this reason mainly, to the middle of the Nineteenth Century, the society of the world had been predominantly masculine. Women had had their place in it, but a secondary place. In Greece and Rome most of the great stories are stories about men, with women as subsidiary characters. In neither country did women ever act on the stage, their rôles being taken by boys. In Plato's large circle no women appear at all. Not till the revival of Italy in the Renaissance do women begin to take a marked place in European social life. Not till the Eighteenth Century in France and the Nineteenth in England do they reach at last a position of relative equality with their husbands.

III

Years ago, by way of a *jeu d'esprit,* I amused myself one afternoon in tracing the so-called emancipation of women in terms of the evolution of her hat. That there was some mysterious social significance in a woman's hat had long been clear to me, since on certain formal occasions she could not appear without one, while in cases more formal still, in evening dress, for instance, to appear without one was *de rigueur.* Going back to the days when woman as a civilized being

first emerges over the rim of time, I found her headdress to be an important detail in human history.

Almost as soon as we begin to see woman as to any degree a social factor we find her wearing the veil. It was a real veil, enveloping her completely. Its purpose was twofold. It indicated her seclusion of spirit; it was her guarantee of safety. When wars between tribes had been without quarter, and women and children were slain with the rest, the destruction of the whole human race seemed only a question of time. But a convention was somehow established that the veiled woman would henceforth be sacred. No one would dare touch her. As the potential mother she was consecrated to the future of mankind. She could come and go freely.

This respect for the seclusion of women became general throughout the East, where it is still the ruling social law. During the Great War some English friends of my own were compelled to abandon the house they had lived in for many years in Constantinople and seek refuge in one of the Allied countries—all except the women. They could remain safely. Because the house was better protected when occupied, the women lived

there, undisturbed in any way, till peace was re-established. In reading the Letters of Miss Gertrude Bell I have sometimes wondered whether her amazing experiences in Turkey and Arabia were not the more easily made possible because she was a woman. Though the protective veil was gone, the protective fact of womanhood remained.

But as soon as life became more secure, in ancient Greece and Rome, for example, the rules concerning the veil were relaxed. It continued to be for women the only form of headdress, as it has always been the most graceful one, but it was worn back from the face. The face was uncovered, and yet could be concealed by the simplest movement of a hand. Though the liberation was in proportion to this change, though women mingled with men on a footing that would have been impossible a few centuries earlier, there was still no organized society capable of including them both. Society was still masculine, women bringing into it, as far as they were allowed to go, a disturbing element. Greek and Latin literature, especially the Latin, reflects, with the intrusion of women, a break-up of morals which heralded disaster.

Greece fell; Rome fell; Byzantium fell; the Christian Church arose. In the long period of transition woman went into seclusion again. Immured in either a castle or a convent she struggled for social existence against forces over which she could triumph only by subtlety. When we next notice her headgear she is still wearing the veil, but a new security, a new softening of manners, has twisted it around a high hornlike structure projecting upward and backward, the forerunner of the hat. This meant that while they would not wholly abandon the protective symbol which had carried them through so much, women had freedom and means at least to turn it to purely ornamental purposes. They considered "lines" even then, for with a background of attenuated Gothic arches, both in the castle at home and abroad in the Cathedral, they saw that their note was one of high-pointed stateliness.

But the arch became flatter, and the horn came down. The flattened arch was due to the necessities of the new domestic architecture, which did not allow of unlimited space upward. At once the veil adapted itself to another form, and we get the angular framework to be seen in many of Holbein's portraits.

The angular framework was not becoming to the face, and when we reach the new luxury which began with Catherine de' Medici in France the veil folds itself up into the neat turban, cocked slightly to one side, which gives the aristocratic touch to François Clouet's sitters of the reigns of Henry III and Charles IX. From this the English developed the broad-brimmed hat with flowers, feathers, and ribbons, till nearly every trace of the protecting and secluding veil of primitive antiquity was lost.

Nearly every such trace, but not all. One or two still survive, notably in the Spanish mantilla and in the wedding veil. The mantilla is a direct inheritance from the Oriental strain in Spanish blood, while the wedding veil still keeps up the fiction, a memory out of our wholly prehistoric past, that the bride has been *nupta* (veiled) from her husband right up to the nuptial hour. "I, Nupta" (the veiled one) "take thee, Maritus"—or, as the Book of Common Prayer economically prints it, "I, N., take thee, M., to be my wedded husband." Under that *N.*, which to most of us seems meaningless, is hidden away the whole outlived history not only of women but of mankind.

For exactly the reason that the woman of Islam

covers her face with the yashmak when she goes into the streets of Cairo or Constantinople, the woman of New York or London or any little country town wears a hat when she goes to church or into a public place. The act is reminiscent of the time when she would have endangered herself by doing otherwise. Apparently in the early Christian Church there was some argument on this point, and the women seem to have contended that if the Church was the Kingdom of God, they should have the same immunities and privileges there as men. But St. Paul did not see the practical wisdom of this step. Not yet! he seems to have said. Even in the Church the time is not ripe for this symbol of protection and respect to be done away with. A woman who frees herself from that timeless tradition of her sex which alone has preserved the human race from suicide is going further than present facts will carry her.

Later events, in the rude life which followed the breaking up of the Roman Empire, justified the Apostle in this stand, and might justify him again. Our future does not to all of us look so assured that we can feel certain that an era of perpetual and universal peace has come, and every time a woman stands before a mirror and puts on

her hat to go out into the streets the act has a measure of prophetic value. It reminds us that far as we have gone in civilization we have not gone all the way. There are dangers around us which may still drive women back to seclusion and the veil. This will probably not happen; and yet we do not lack sinister hints that it is a possibility.

At the same time there is another situation in which social usage is just as insistent that women shall appear in public with uncovered head. There is more than caprice in this, more than a matter of idle fashion. If for reasons mainly physical woman is still under protection and takes a means of showing it that meets the eye—the same means she has taken through the ages—she does the reverse on those occasions in which she assumes the lead. She assumes the lead, on grounds quite sufficiently self-evident, wherever men and women meet for that social intercourse still relatively new in history. The fact that there she has her head uncovered, though covered everywhere else, is her intimation that she has at last reached a condition in which she has nothing to fear.

The circumstance that where she follows man

she is still, so to speak, veiled, and that where she leads him custom demands that she be unveiled, lays emphasis on the fact that their fields are contiguous but not identical, that at times they cover the same ground, and yet on the whole keep separate and distinct.

IV

I have taken advantage of a theme which some may consider trivial to stress the fact that up to a comparatively recent date the histories of men and women were different. Women have of necessity been prepared for one kind of life, men for another. There was no help for it. This is worth while insisting on for the reason that women so often speak of men as having kept them in subjection. As a matter of fact they themselves have willingly lived apart from the rougher side of life in order to be out of danger. This they have not done from cowardice—they are not less sporting than men—but from the compulsion of their call as wives and mothers. So far have men been from keeping them in subjection that whenever the state of civilization warranted so bold a step they have encouraged women to twist up the veil into some decorative shape, and come forward.

They seem to have assumed, however—vainly as they see from what is happening to-day—that each sex would continue to stick to the field for which it had been trained through the ages.

V

We are probably watching at this minute one of those momentous transitions by which mankind has passed from base to base while aware of no more than a sense of dizziness or confusion. What it is to women I am not prepared to say, but I know that the minds of many men who think—perhaps of the vast majority—are greatly perplexed by the politico-social changes during the ten years since the Armistice. How have they come about? How were we impelled to move so suddenly from convictions we had held tenaciously for generations, and were still holding tenaciously at the time we gave them up? What witchery was exercised over the English-speaking races that they granted on impulse that which they had so long refused on principle? Having done it, what do they now think of the accomplishment?

I am not hinting that they regret it; but I do think they find themselves bewildered. Though

little is said about it, they know they are coming to one of those crises which test the character formed and tend, perhaps, to re-form it. The conditions are still so new that they do not yet know how to deal with them. In the politico-social life of our day we are at a place where we cannot do much but mark time, but that will not last forever.

Briefly expressed, the condition of which I speak is brought about by the fact that the women who came forward as men's helpmates during the World War have lost no time since the war has been over in showing themselves as competitors. Instead of remaining in what was conceded as their own sphere they have boldly invaded that of men. The ideal of the new race of enfranchised women has seemed to be expansion not according to their own nature but according to a man's. The capacity to do a man's work, to acquire a man's tone, to take on a man's habits, and even to indulge in a man's vices, seems to be, in a great many instances, the final test of a free woman's fitness. The woman who can "hold down a man's job" is presented as the ideal of her sex. We have women in business, women in Congress, women in Parliament, women mayors, women gover-

nors, women judges, jurymen, clergymen. The smoking, drinking, hard-swearing woman has become a familiar ornament to drawing rooms. The fight which women used to wage against what they called "the double standard in morals" has ended in the quiet acceptance of the man's standard as their own. And in the meanwhile their special work as women remains as badly done as ever.

I am far from saying that these characteristics stamp all the members of the new group as individuals. I am only listing unconnected phenomena which men find disconcerting. This revelation of woman is a new one to most men, and masculine minds with regard to what is feminine are slow. It is safe to say that the results of the last ten years have taken them by surprise, and that they do not know as a whole what to think in this unexpected situation.

Perhaps if I give my small personal experience on the subject I may make clearer what I mean. Before the Enfranchisement I was one of those men who worked for the Cause, doing my small best both in writing and speaking. In my experience of life I had seen a vast work on behalf of poor women, overworked and underfed, which

was not being done, and had not since the beginning of time ever been attempted. Already I have spoken of classes neglected by philanthropy—the love and pity of human beings for each other—but of them all the poor man's wife, the mother of his children, with least opportunity, and working her fingers to the bone, has seemed the one whom we most cruelly let alone with her child-bearing, her drudgeries, her innumerable cares, and her shattered nerves, from which she gets neither pause nor relief.

She, it seemed to me, with all she stood for, was the centre of a new world reform which only women enjoying the full status of free citizens could ever bring about. What they were to do I don't know, but that was not my business. Women would know. That which they didn't know they could somehow find out. It was part of their work; it belonged to their sphere. Men have all sorts of aids and associations for mutual help and sympathy, most of them nation wide: labour unions, benefit societies, Elks, Odd Fellows, Rotaries, Kiwanis, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Columbus, Young Men's Christian and Hebrew Associations, with the Freemasons to add dignity. Women have almost nothing that is

not more or less parochial. The enfranchised women would see that poor women were provided for, and that the bravest, most patient, and most suffering class of all humanity would find champions at last.

Well, I have heard a good deal of talk about all this since the new liberation has set in, but as yet have seen little result beyond the passing of the buck. "Protective legislation for women and children" has been the plea on which most of the women members of Parliament and Congress have been elected. In the efficacy of legislation women's belief is both naïve and pathetic. Pass laws—and men will have to enforce them. Pass laws—and then we can put everything in the hands of the police. Since women have had their new share of power salvation by the policeman has come to be an axiom of faith.

VI

This is not a political disquisition. I am far from forgetting that my point is the effect on character of social life, and speak of this aspect of it only because it is so much in the public mind. It is more in the public mind, I venture to think, than it is under public discussion, largely for the

reason that we don't know what to say of it. Men are disappointed with the advent of women into public life; women themselves are disappointed with it; yet neither likes to express an opinion, the causes being so obscure.

May one who knows so little about the subject —and who among us knows much?—make so bold as to say that we have only passed the first decade of an experiment which will need some hundreds of years to work itself out? After all, women have been far more dazzled by the opportunities thrown open to them than they have admitted. Without preparation for what was before them, all they have so far been able to think of has been imitating men. In spite of fifty years of talking in advance they had no programme and have evolved none. To do what men were doing was as far as their invention carried them. In our town there is a story which I think cannot be a "chestnut" because it is told of one of our local families. A little girl being ill in bed was asked what she would like to play with. She was not long in choosing. "Whatever George is playing with." George's toy was snatched from him and his sister promptly broke it.

Women are just at that stage of what will some

day doubtless prove to be a tremendous human advance. But for that to happen they must see their work as lying in their own sphere as well as in that of men. One great problem alone could engage their attention for the next hundred years. There is in this country, as I tried to indicate above, an incalculable amount of woman's mental, emotional, and physical energy. The idle woman of the United States—unmarried women between twenty and fifty, let us say, supported by money for which they never had to lift a hand —lie on its resources as a huge, unremunerative incubus. Who will get this strength and this need together? It is something too difficult ever to be done, many will assert; and yet it is not more difficult than the harnessing of water power that had been running to the same kind of waste ever since time began, so as to make it feed factories and heat and light homes. But that has been done —by men. Women can do the other.

They can accomplish this and much more; only they will have to do it humbly. So far they have come on the great scene somewhat boastfully. "Let *us* show you how to do your work," they have in substance declared to men, "then you will

see something. Let us introduce our housekeeping methods into your businesses and governments and it will be a veritable cleaning up."

To the best of my knowledge no man has ever replied to this with the dismay he has felt in his heart. With housekeeping methods in businesses and governments it would be as hard at the end of a year to keep a typist in an office or a clerk in a bank as it is to keep a cook. But, as a matter of fact, there has been little fear of this danger since, in public affairs, up to the present, women have cut a poor figure. One gracious lady will not vacate her seat in Congress without having done much good, but then she was doing much good before she entered public life and will continue so doing after she has left it. Of the ten or twelve women who have come and gone in the British Parliament it is doubtful whether any name would be known to the average American reader but that of the sparkling Virginian whose wit amuses two hemispheres. Of women in other high offices the record has been discouraging.

VII

The point as to which to feel assured is that men need women, and women need men, as the

lock needs a key and the key needs a lock—the simile is Chesterton's—but that the services which each can render to the other are those which neither can perform for themselves. A state of confusion has risen through the attempt of women to do for men what men, with a fair amount of success, have done for themselves for thousands of years, and in which they needed no help. At the same time what they could not do for themselves, and what women alone can do for them, women seem unwilling to take up. If the refusal has not been downright, the compliance has been so little enthusiastic that it almost amounts to none at all.

I speak of the home and everything that pertains to it. Men, as a whole, are home makers and home lovers. So are women, but the attitude of a woman toward a home is different from that of a man. To the man it is a place for rest and recreation; to a woman, the scene of work. The man takes it as a refuge; the woman, as a prison. The man likes to return to it; the woman, to get away from it. The man would see its problems tackled with some attempt to solve them; the woman accepts its problems as they have come down to

her, making little or no effort to meet them in such a way that they will not come again.

For instance, there is in the realm of housekeeping a difficulty known as the servant question. This is purely a feminine matter, but it affects the comfort, and indirectly the happiness, of whole families. It has its economic, and in America, especially, its political, side; but more than anything else it has its personal side. In both the political and economic aspects it could with some little trouble be smoothed and eased; in the personal it seems beyond solution.

To the ordinary man it is incomprehensible that while he in his business should be able to get all the help he needs, female as well as male, at a painfully low figure, his wife, paying wages which a few years ago would have been prodigious, and offering the most favourable living conditions, should be unable to get good cooks and housemaids merely for the asking and keep them contented with their work. He knows it can be done, because here and there it *is* done, but these cases are exceptional. Somehow, it seems to him, women have managed to "queer" one of the most ancient, and perhaps *the* most ancient, forms of help from man to man, so that few are willing any

more to render it. American girls, for example, will perform any other service, but not that one. That one has a stigma on it borne by no other form of work, and it is women who have put it there.

That is another thing that puzzles him. Adequate help in her household is what every woman needs, almost before she needs anything else. But to those who come to bring it she seems to say, in practice: "You may cook my meals, and make my beds, and sweep my floors, and I will pay all your living expenses and good wages; but you will be regarded as menial, and wear an unseen badge of servitude such as the factory girl, the shop girl, the typist, and the manicure are free from. If you were not a foreigner and helpless you wouldn't think of doing it."

This is no exaggeration of the wrong women have done their own best interests, and as yet men see on their parts no inclination to make the attempt to right it. It concerns men as closely as women, but it is a woman's question. Though women alone can deal with it, they turn their backs on it. All they seem able to think of as a solution is to pay higher and higher wages. The only problems which, apparently, they will

tackle eagerly are those which have to do with the control of men.

VIII

It is probable, however, that women, with regard to their new opportunities, are only in the stage of learning "how not to do it." It is a period through which we all pass, and one from which a great deal is to be gained. What men need is patience with their efforts. What women need is humility; for to some of us they seem to have begun the new career without that foundational plank in character. After all, they have but recently put off the veil and put on the hat. Out of the hat phase they emerge as yet only for warranted occasions. I have heard it said that before she took her seat in Parliament Lady Astor considered seriously—for she knew she was making a precedent for women—whether she should wear a hat or go without one. Wisely, as it seems to those who know anything of the significance of her act, she opted the hat, thus summing up the history of the sex she represented. Man's tradition has been different. Before his fellows, before women, before God, he has stood uncovered from the first.

IX

When all is said and done, what men seek in women, and what women seek in men, are the softening, stimulating, civilizing qualities, through which each helps the other to a bit of inspiration. That, of course, can be given, can be exchanged, in many ways, but mostly, I think, it comes through the free and frequent intercourse of social life.

To the term social life I shall make no attempt to add a definition, since what would define it in one walk in life would be inadequate in another. All phases of human existence as it is known to us Occidentals have their ways and means by which men and women come together, not for purposes of love and marriage—I am excluding them from these considerations—but for the mere haphazards of companionship. After all, companionship is the root idea in the word "society," and in all kindred words, since *socius,* a companion, is their common source. But the implication is, I think, of a wide association with variety, change, easy intermingling and easy separation, a touch-and-go which nevertheless leaves impressions behind it. In social intercourse there is friendliness, but

not of necessity friendship. Intimacy has, indeed, little part in it. Where between men and women intimacy intrudes itself there are always possibilities of danger. The larger a society can be the better. Where men meet a great many women they grow civilized. Where women meet a great many men they grow strong of soul.

Both acquire polish, that quiet brilliancy which comes only from rubbing. Only hard things, like stone, wood, metals, and human beings ever take it on. Old furniture, even old porcelains, draw a peculiar sheen known to connoisseurs as the *patina* from long contact with human fingers. So does character from close and varied association with other men and women. The recluse never has it. The lonely are cut off from it. The man who only frequents men, and the woman whose society is only feminine, lose qualities which cannot be made up to them in any other way. It is an odd fact that men without women tend to become feminine, while women without men will often be mannish in their ways. Only social friction and clash with one another, constant and good-natured, will at last wear down our oddities, rawnesses, and angularities to a smoothness of surface human and urbane.

And this is not external only; it works inward. It makes the character strong, wise, tolerant, and self-controlled. It is not without interest to note that courtesy came out of *courts*. Not till courts—the best bred society of Italy after the Renaissance—sprang into existence did either courtesy or courtship become possible. High standards of intelligence are inevitably developed by high standards of manners, and the latter are found most frequently where men and women mingle on a footing of equality.

Here I begin to wonder as to existing American tendencies. I cannot but ask myself whether there is not an inclination on the part of men as a body to pull away socially from women as a body. It is not a subject as to which any one man's observation can take him very far, but he at least does no harm in bringing the question up. Do not the social activities of American women scare men away from them? Is there not on the part of men a reluctance to give themselves to any form of social entertainment to which the use of a mind is incidental? You will get them to attend with alacrity enough when you "throw a brawl," with plenty of dubious cocktails, with a

three-piece orchestra of which the tom-tom is the leading instrument, with negroid dancing working up the dancers into grunts and shouts of men and squeals of women in an orgiastic voodoo frenzy; but from anything more sober, in which there is a glimmer of the intellectual, I ask if the manhood of America is not quick to steal away.

It seems to me, though I may be wrong, that when it comes to the social hours men like to flock by themselves, as the saying goes, leaving women in the lurch. Perhaps they have too much of women during business. Perhaps they are not interested in the subjects women like to talk about. Perhaps, because of the narrowness of vocabulary to which as a nation we cut ourselves down, they distrust their power of keeping up a conversation. At any rate, it seems to me that in proportion as American women advance American men recede, leaving the women to hold the field alone. In the great restaurants you will see table after table at which women beautifully dressed are entertaining for each other, while there will be other tables, each seating eight or ten men *en garçon*. Is this a symbol? Is it a symptom of a widespread, unconscious alienation of the sexes

from each other? Do the cyclonic forces of our civilization operate in such a way as to thrust men and women apart?

Should this be the case it would be a measureless pity—for men. In the acquiring of manners the American man needs the society of women as the man of no other nation has ever needed it. Both in speech and bearing he is naturally rough. His boyhood traditions have, as a rule, all been on the side of roughness. No intolerance on earth is more pitiless than that of American children toward other children less uncouth than themselves. "My son has two languages," an American gentleman is recently reported to have said, "the one he speaks at home and the one he uses at school. The one he uses at school he was obliged to learn in self-protection."

Something like this can be considered true not only of boys but of men. When not constantly in the society of women men lapse instinctively into the barbarisms of schoolboy days. Years ago, on an ocean liner, I overheard an Englishwoman and an American woman discussing the merits and demerits of their respective forms of speech. "What strikes you," asked the Englishwoman, "as most peculiar in our English pronunciation?"

"Its affectation," the American answered promptly. Then, to give her companion the opportunity to hit back, she asked the same question as to what the English first noticed in the American way of speaking. "Its vulgarity," replied the Englishwoman, as frankly as her friend.

It was tit for tat, with a measure of truth on both sides; and if on ours there is vulgarity it is to our women that we look to help us to correct it. Not that we deliberately throw ourselves on their hands, or shift to their shoulders the responsibility for our shortcomings; but speech and manners come within the sphere in which men beg for women's help more than they do in politics or business. Ever since we have recognized the charm of gentleness it is to women that men have naturally turned for its interpretation.

X

For gentleness is one of the special gifts generated by social intercourse. Already in the ancient world, certainly in the world as ancient as that of Rome, the discovery had been made that the members of a *gens,* a noble clan, had a habit of bearing and speech less coarse and uncouth than that which prevailed among people of com-

moner inheritance. It was less noisy, less swaggering, less bumptious. There was modesty in it, serenity, kindliness, and much consideration for other people. Before long it came to be acknowledged that the man of good family, the member of a *gens,* was *gentilis* as the matter of course of his origin. He was high bred, and being high bred he had that combination of qualities almost indefinable which grouped together make a *gentleman.*

It is pleasant to think that this perception was reached not by Christians, nor yet by moderns, but by a people whom we are accustomed to think of as hard and proud. They were hard and proud; but such is the force of courtesy, kindness, and patience that they never fail to win over crudity and harshness.

Of this we see many a good example in the intercourse of diplomatists. Every now and then it happens among them that someone's nerves give way. Accusations are made; plain truths are uttered; the fat is in the fire, as the saying is. We on the outside are excited; we feel the tension; we look for a retort which may possibly lead to war. But what comes is generally a soft answer,

which soothes, or explains, or at least postpones, and so the whole incident blows over.

Many of us are old enough to remember a day or two during which the United States and Great Britain were nearer war than at any time since 1812. It was while Cleveland was President, and the cause was the Venezuela question. There were twenty-four hours during which this country was so tense that had war been declared it would have welcomed it. Breathless we hung on Lord Salisbury's reply to Mr. Cleveland's ultimatum. The day dragged. It seemed as if the afternoon papers would never come out. People stood waiting in the streets, afraid of missing them by going home. At last they appeared, and the only information they gave us was that Lord Salisbury had gone down to Hatfield to keep Christmas.

But it was a master stroke. The two or three days which followed gave time for all our tempers to cool down. The folly of such a war over a few square miles of swamp of no vital importance either to British Guiana or Venezuela itself was borne in on everyone, and gentleness of temper won another victory.

Presumably diplomatists are trained for this,

and those who are most efficient in the practice are those who become the Lord Salisburys of their epochs. But every one of us, however humble his station, would benefit by a similar habit of restraint. Some degree of self-control social life generates almost automatically, but it is done more effectively when the mind applies itself to the task. We are all called on to be diplomatists, and not least in the office and the home. Tact consists largely in saying nothing when saying anything is dangerous. To "talk back" is always a mistake, unless some vital point is to be gained. What rises to the lips in the moment of anger can be better said, if it must be said, after a brief postponement. There will be other opportunities, but in the meantime let Lord Salisbury go down to Hatfield to keep Christmas. By refusing to do this many a man has thrown up a job in such a way as to mar the natural sequence of his life and render it impossible ever to retrieve his mistake.

But it is at home that the strain of life is tightest and the diplomatic attitude most imperative. Between husband and wife, between parent and child, the art of saying nothing when nothing should be said can reach the stage of genius. Nowhere is voluntary co[illegible]esy more in demand

than just where the rules of formality are suspended to a point at which it is often hard to see what is permissible and what is not. To a rising temper there is no counteragent like silence. You do not of necessity either give up or give in; you only postpone. After Lord Salisbury came back from Hatfield the American demands were conceded; but among those of us old enough to remember the incident it is doubtful whether fifty per cent. could now tell you what they were. What we quarrel over in families has as a rule the same relative unimportance. We remember the quarrel years after we have forgotten what it was about. A wise old lady once gave me the advice never to go to bed leaving a misunderstanding in the family unarranged. Stay up till you laugh again, she used to say, if it means staying up all night. I have always found that this excellent precept could be put into practice without going to extremes in the way of wakefulness.

For if it takes two to make a quarrel it takes only one to induce peace. When Lord Salisbury goes to Hatfield for Christmas the other party quickly takes the hint. If you have received provocation and do not retort to it, the reaction on the other side comes almost instantaneously. We

are not in vendetta days, neither are we a vendetta people. We have almost no desire to wipe out injuries in blood, and if anyone gives us a lead in good temper we are nearly always glad to snatch at it. The diplomatist's job among us is really an easy one, if only we have our diplomatist. He—or it may easily be she—is best produced by that social life which includes business life and family life and carries tact and courtesy to their highest.

"Forbearing one another in love," is St. Paul's fine way of putting it. To the best of my knowledge he is the first great teacher to take this practical view of our simpler and more primal relations with vehement emotion. It is a point to which he returns again and again in his letters to his converts. "Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." "Be of one mind; live in peace." "If a man be overtaken in a fault ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." "Be at peace among yourselves . . . be patient toward all men." One could multiply these quotations but they are too familiar to need repetition. The point that stands out is that St. Paul was the first to lift what I have treated as a mere matter of domestic diplomacy

to the divine order of relationships. He glorifies it; he gives it a value beyond the worldly prudence of taking each day as it comes. If we forbear one another in love we lift a commonplace effort to control the temper among the eternities, which are held in their courses by love.

XI

This leads us to consider briefly the difference between Christian social life and any other kind. But the first conclusion we are led to is that there is no other kind. It is a curious fact that only those peoples who have accepted, even nominally, the teaching of Jesus Christ have ever developed it, or discovered any need for it. Look for Turkish social life, or Arab, or Indian, or Chinese, or Japanese, or Javanese, and though you will find various ways of exercising hospitality, a general movement of all who can take part in it in a large, leisurely, and varied intercourse you will not find. Hospitality is but one element in what we Europeans, Australasians, and Americans have come to know as a society, but beyond it the ancient mind, like the modern non-Christian mind, seems never to have progressed. Now and then someone gave a feast, in

all probability for men alone. If any women attended it they would show themselves by the very act to be of the order of the hetæræ. There would be too much to eat, too much to drink, and during the process a performance by singing or dancing girls. All would go home drunk who were capable of going home at all. This was the nearest the ancient world ever came to what we understand as social life, till the institution of the great public baths led to such aberrations that they called down on themselves their own punishment.

But wherever the teachings of Christ have been established—even nominally, as I have said—there at once has developed a graciousness of life which given the opportunity would soon fill lonely and empty lives with sympathy and gladness. If I could analyze the impulses of Christian character I should say that they came somewhat in this order:

1. A spirit of graciousness in the inner self which makes the heart go out toward others in simple promptings of friendliness.

2. A spirit of interest in others which impels to the sharing of experience and confidence and makes for conversation.

3. A liking to spend an hour of a day in the company of others, without motive or intention beyond pleasure in their society.

4. The desire on occasions of showing special hospitality which results in some form of reunion of both friends and strangers, so enlarging the borders of acquaintanceship and friendliness.

5. The recognition of all human beings as having a claim on our regard so that our social groups may feel kindly toward each other, without envy or bitterness.

XII

In other words, we should come to see the Spirit of Christ as genial, cheerful, and tender in meeting human yearnings. Looking at the works of wisdom and light it has inspired wherever it has found a foothold it is strange that there should be minds like Gibbons's that see in it an influence sullen, repressive, and anticreative. It is true that anticreative, repressive, and sullen men, papal or puritan, have from time to time controlled the Church, or some portion of it, just as from time to time we have seen sentimental spasms in which emotion has

taken the place of the spiritual life. But that in spite of all misrepresentations the Christian ideal is the sanest and healthiest ever set before man there are proofs so obvious that we have only to look about us to find them.

Of the first order among these is the large, free, common-sense social life it has helped us to develop. Though we have been working at it ever since the Christian Era began it is only within a hundred years that we have brought it to a stage at which we can begin to guess what it will ultimately be. It must not be supposed that as it is now, with so many crudities and inequalities, it is going to remain. As a matter of fact, it is in a state of daily flux. It is changing and ever changing. Those who are able to look back a generation will tell us that it is no longer the same thing as it was thirty years ago. In some details it has gone forward; in others it has gone back; but by this very process of ebb here and flow there it advances like the line of an incoming tide.

This social life, religious, educational, artistic, literary, political, and friendly, is so large that no one mind can take it in, no one eye can

make of it even a cursory survey. In its openness, its splendour, its fecundity, its fearlessness, there is a spontaneity about it more characteristically Christian than there is about the Church. To me the Church suggests spirits in prison; while that vast free life of the Christian world, transcending as it does the limitations the Church has fixed upon itself, is the true home of the Holy Ghost, that ever dynamic working power of God.

True, there is much in it that shocks, much that discourages. When we consider some of the perversities of our time to which I have sufficiently alluded, and that blight on youth which is worse than frost in June, some of us feel like stealing away with Elijah, to lie down and beg that we may die. "It is enough! Now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." But in this very legend we get a rebuke and an encouragement which may well be to us as a lifelong brace.

Elijah had made his great demonstration of the true God on the top of Carmel. The prophets of Baal he had taken and slain. To avenge this outrage to her god, Jezebel, the queen, had

threatened his life, and he had fled to the wilderness. Finding shelter in a cave, exhausted both by the long journey and his terrific emotional experiences, he lay down and slept. Then God spoke to him. "What doest thou here, Elijah? Why have you run away? What has frightened you?" Elijah tries to explain. "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts. For the children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; *and I, even I only, am left,* and they seek my life to take it away."

At once God bids him arise and gives him new work to do. But he does not send him on it before adding the heartening words:

"Yet have I left me an indefinitely large number in Israel"—that is the implication in the Hebrew seven thousand—"every knee that hath not bowed to Baal. You think you are working alone. Because these flashy children of Baal, these young men and women who consider it smart to parade their godlessness, are so much in the public eye you fancy no one remains true to the great ideals but yourself. I will show you that you are wrong. Don't be down-hearted; don't be pessimistic. I have still left me an in-

definitely large number who will be working for me and for spiritual progress."

When we look round on our existing society with something like dismay I know of no better corrective than those energizing words.

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTER AND CONQUEST

I

IN FRONT of the Throne Seven Torches of fire burn—the Seven Spirits of God."

Of the Apocalyptic literature of the two centuries before Christ and perhaps the first century after him only one book is tolerably well known to readers of to-day, the Revelation of John. Other books are extant, and accessible, of which the one most familiar to us by name is the Book of Enoch, quoted by St. Jude in his epistle, and referred to by St. Peter. A fragment from another such book seems to have become embedded in the Book of Daniel, the latest in time of all the books of the Old Testament. Another such work is the Assumption of Moses, nowadays incomplete, while a fourth is the Apocalypse of Baruch. All of these works were well known to readers of the time of Christ, and for several centuries later. The Revelation of

John on its appearance took its place in this group of Hebrew writings, and little is heard of it till in the Third and Fourth centuries questions, which have never been fully answered, began to arise as to its authorship and authenticity.

Our immediate connection with it is in its being, among other things, the great Hymn of Conquest.

Conquest was the commission with which man came into the world. "And God said, let us make man in our own likeness, to resemble us, with mastery." With mastery as his life impulse man began his age-long fight against the material and on behalf of a spiritual world. Of that conflict we all know something, partly from history, partly from the Bible, and more through our own experience. Fears, doubts, despairs have attacked us during all the thousands of years of the struggle upward, but the Revelation of John is one great cry of triumph over the victory already won, when there is faith to see the vision.

This is not the place in which to discuss this marvellous work in detail, but if the reader will bear in mind that through all its obscurities and complexities this note of conquest swells and swells till it reaches a climax such as has rarely

broken from human lips, it will be enough. The exultation is over the downfall of the mystic city Babylon—the historic Babylon had, at the time when John was in Patmos, been centuries in ruins—whose opposition to God had haunted the Hebrew imagination ever since primeval days. It is worth while to evoke once more the shout that goes up over her final judgment and collapse. It voices not only the complete emergencies of what had once seemed a material race into their immortal status as sons of God, but the end of all our struggle, sins, and failures in the kingdom where God alone reigns.

"Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her shall bewail her and lament her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off, and saying: 'Alas alas! that great city, Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.'

"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more—the merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls, of fine linen, purple silk, and scarlet, of all sandal wood, of ivory, brass, iron, and marble, cinnamon, scents,

and ointments, frankincense, wine, and oil, flour and wheat, beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, and souls of men.

"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing: 'Alas! alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour so great riches is come to nought!'

"And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning: 'What city is like unto this great city!' And they cast dust on their heads, weeping and wailing: 'Alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, for in one hour she is made desolate!'

"And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee. No craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee. The sound of a millstone shall be heard no more in thee. The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee. The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.

"Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying: 'Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.'

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying: 'Alleleuia! Salvation and glory and honour and power be unto the Lord our God.' "

II

This is but one of many such passages in a book of which the action is on a transcendent scale, of mighty, mystic powers, of angels who make a bauble of the earth, of voices like trumpets or like cataracts, of strange superhuman things with many heads and horns, of celestial cities, of bottomless pits, of women clothed with the sun, of angels and glories and thrones and raptures and woes, till the mind aches in the effort to seize their significance. And yet here and there are passages and pictures of still and stately beauty such as, once known, never leave the memory.

Such is that from which I have chosen a title

for my little book nobler than I should have ventured on for anything so modest had it not been for the fact that it expresses so aptly all I have to say in my summing up.

The Revelation of John opens with seven messages sent by the Jesus Christ of his Vision, to the Seven Churches which were in Asia, that small and wealthy Roman province, which has bequeathed its name to us as that of a whole continent. Of the cities of the Seven Churches but one remains to-day, a centre for tragic happenings. But each of the messages sent by the "first begotten of the dead" to each of the Seven Churches has a further message to everyone occupied with considerations of character and conquest. To these messages we shall return later, when we have followed the Vision a little further.

"After this I looked, and there was a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice I had heard, talking with me like a trumpet, said: 'Come up here, and I will show you what must come to pass after this.' At once I found myself rapt in the Spirit, and lo! a Throne stood in heaven . . . and in front of the Throne Seven Torches of fire burn—the Seven Spirits of God."

Seven, it will be remembered, stands in the Hebrew mystic science of numerals for an indefinitely large number. The infinitude of torches was the infinitude of the Spirits of God. The infinitude of the Spirits of God was the infinitude of God's dynamic forces, fighting, helping, sustaining wherever in his universe the struggle upward was going on. A torch means light, light of which from the beginning God has been the source.

To me the Seven Torches of Character are: I. Humility; II. Patience; III. Graciousness; IV. Work; V. Pleasure; VI. Companionship; VII. Conquest. In all of these the Spirits of God attend on the efforts made. What the Spirits of God consist of none of us dare say; but we know that part of their existence must be inspiration and power. The Seven Torches of Character burn, of their very nature, with an infinite measure of Light and Energy, since the dynamic forces of God direct every good in the world. If character means conquest God must be behind it, within it, and before it as the great objective. To develop character is beyond everything else to eliminate that which obtrudes itself between

ourselves and him. To this end Energy and Light are means that nothing can withstand.

In other words, the evolution of character is more than the humdrum practical thing I have hitherto considered it to be; it is illuminated by the torches which burn before the throne; it is animated by the infinitude of Spirit. Unless we see it in that light we shall never be able to give our efforts scope. Prudential reasons are a beginning, but unless they mature into the spiritual they are but as untimely buds.

To be less vague in my language let me take a concrete example. You become conscious of a fault which you wish to overcome. Let us say that it is nothing more criminal than a tendency to waste time. You select means of filling time. You try to fill it usefully. You keep on hand a book which slips easily in and out of a pocket so as to cover idle minutes; you find something more important to occupy the hours. Now, you can have two distinct points of view in doing this. You may act from purely temporal reasons, or you may consciously associate yourself with the Seven Spirits of God. A good thing done from temporal reasons is always a good thing; but the

same done in connection with infinite Energy and Light must give us the support of the powers which rule the universe. We enlarge ourselves; we enhance ourselves. Our methods may still be humdrum, but our motives are transformed.

III

Our motives are those of Conquest. From the first to the last breath we draw Conquest is the goal we never cease to keep before us. The newborn infant's first acquaintance with life is an act of struggle, the struggle to get its breath. From that first victory struggle for further victories marks every minute of its life. Much as it may gain there is always something before it which as yet it has not gained, and its impulse, in normal conditions, is to be diligent after that. So much does the struggle count that the man who is not fighting his way upward is surely sinking down.

Fighting involves hardship; and hardship, it seems to me, we must learn to accept as life's first matter of course. By hardship I mean anything hard, and especially anything hard to bear. It may be denial, disappointment, bereavement, or whatever else falls to the common human lot.

It must be borne in any case; and since it must be borne, it had better be borne as a means of strengthening. It can easily become a means of weakening. By rebellion, repining, complaining, or any of a dozen ways of non-acceptance, we can so excite ourselves that the trial might just as well not have come to us. That it should come is a privilege. Hardship is the drill essential to conquest, and conquest the completion of the earthly career.

Perhaps the sublimest achievement that we can conceive of is man's rise from the Neanderthal or Piltdown stage to what he is to-day. The way in which he acquired memory, reason, imagination, invention, must have been something like baby growth prolonged through thousands of years. There must have been a charm about it too, the charm we find when a horse or a dog or an elephant exhibits some endearing glimpse of almost human mentality. These half-formed creatures gradually learning to laugh, to think, to speak, to love, must often have been sweet and sympathetic in spite of their underlying ferocity.

Long before they knew how to keep a record of it they were considering the heavens, the emotions, nebulous responsibilities, rough principles

of right and wrong, rudiments of law, and crudely deducing God. The account of Creation given in the Book of Genesis—two accounts, in fact—may be as far from accurate as a child's conception of grown-up life is from the reality; but that the prehistoric mind, with nothing to teach it, no chronicles to refer to, and only its own thought as a guide, should have conceived of it at all is a triumph of intelligence.

All that was conquest on the part of these incipient men and women to whom thought, love, and laughter were still novelties. The time came when they had drawn so many conclusions, and treasured so many experiences, that a way to preserve some of them in some form that couldn't be wiped out by time became an imperative yearning. This they met in a fashion so bold as to strike admiration dumb. To evolve an alphabet and cut their records into rocks was as masterly an idea as any behind our most amazing modern inventions.

The point is that all these steps in progress, and many, many others, were taken by a people urged on by some irresistible driving force such as no other earthly stock had ever given a sign of. When into the nostrils of this species God

breathed the breath of life he must also have breathed a will to achieve akin in essence to his own. Already the Seven Torches burned before his Throne; already the radiation of his infinite Spirit was at work. Even in those primeval days character was revealing that infinite complexity with which only an infinitude of Spirit could keep pace.

IV

For it must be remembered that conquest is always the act of individuals. We speak of conquering armies, Alexander's, Charlemagne's, or Wellington's, but when we come to close quarters with them, all we find is so many individual lads, each of whom submits to discipline and obedience in order that together they may carry out an end.

Now, just as the principles of physical training are fairly familiar to us all, so are those which concern our education in general morality. It is not because I undervalue their importance that I have hitherto laid no stress on the obvious elements in character: diligence, sobriety, truthfulness, sexual control, but rather that I consider them sufficiently well understood. Thousands of

teachers from the Pope downward are occupied in their daily exposition, while, as I have said before, I am only a picker-up of unconsidered trifles. I am a gleaner who gathers not the great harvest but the scattered ears of wheat which the reapers have let fall accidentally, then have passed on and forgotten. I think it is worth while to say this for the reason that they are subjects of tremendous importance to the development of character—the drink question, for example, and the sex question—which I have passed over altogether. Experts, I repeat, have for hundreds of years been giving us instruction as to these, and anything I could say of them would be mere repetition. Not that I claim originality for what I do say, only, such as it is, it is my own.

We must all then be conquerors, sharers together in the everlasting victory and trained along lines which we understand. That is the end to which we were destined when we came into the world *with mastery*. It is noteworthy that the prehistoric beginning of the Scriptures is on this note of mastery while its apocalyptic end swings to the phrase: *To him that overcometh.*

That is the further message beyond each of the messages to the Seven Churches. The body of the message will often contain severe rebuke; the after message has for him that overcometh only the promise of some rich gift as the crown of character.

The last of these after messages I will cite as the culminating promise of the Scriptures:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcome, and am set down with my Father in His Throne."

In the course of the three thousand years—not reckoning the unknown period of the accumulation of prehistoric knowledge preserved in the earlier part of the Book of Genesis—in which the Scriptures took their present shape, this I conceive to be the supreme bit of revelation or the most advanced achievement of discovery, as you choose to put it, between men and God and God and men. To get its meaning, however, we must be careful to see the Throne of God, so much venerated in Jewish and Christian thought, not as an article of celestial furniture on which some radiant Being sits down and never gets up again, but as an eternal symbol. It stands

for a condition of Eternal Power. When we say that Jesus Christ *overcame* to the point at which he was seated at the right hand of God we mean simply that his spiritual attainments were such that he proved himself God, with full disposal of God's power. When we follow his example, and also *overcome,* demonstrating that mastery which is our inheritance by birth, we too prove that we share the divine nature and are lifted to the lordship over power.

To some of us these may be thoughts beyond knowledge, as indeed they are; but we do pass beyond knowledge whenever we think of God. After all, our actual knowledge is as narrow as our physical horizon. If we did not transcend it we should be shut up in mental obscurity. What the least spiritual, the least imaginative among us can read in Our Lord's message is a promise of beautiful fulfilment for which exact words would be insufficient and exact details impossible. "With him who overcometh I will share my power, even as I overcame and share my Father's power." There is a statement sober and yet glorious, vague if you like, and yet as definite as anything our present minds could tolerate, in which we see the end of the conflict begun

whenever a new-born baby is laid in its mother's arm.

V

In the whole round of Creation there is nothing to equal in beauty the thought of that fragile little life embodying the vast principle of universal domination. "And God said, Let us make man in our own likeness, to resemble us, with mastery." The likeness is in the mastery. It is not to be supposed that the physical child which must be slapped on the back to make it draw its breath, is that which was made in the image of God. He who is gifted with the power of mastery as the son of God is he who "owes this birth of his," according to St. John, "not to human blood, or to any impulse of the flesh," but to God alone. And yet what our eyes see is the little human baby, apparently the least self-sufficient of human beings, and as delicate in texture as a flower. A dignity all its own is stamped on the baby brow; a loveliness beyond anything our fancy can ascribe to angels bathes his features and limbs. His breath is as sweet as a summer wind over hayfields. His eyes are deep with the mysteries he has come to solve. In the instinct to feed, to speak, to laugh, the little mouth puckers with

soft comments of its own. The hands are tense with the will to work, to strike, to hold. It is in those hands, so tender and yet so tenacious, that we first note the readiness to fight and win which is to be his destiny.

There he lies, so weak, so strong, the most appealing thing that ever was, eyes closed, fists clenched, mouth set, quite possibly with poverty and sordidness all round him, yet hiding in his heart the secret which came forth with him from God, and which will only be disclosed when the long way is travelled to the Throne.

We said at the beginning that Character is Fate. Perhaps we should say now that it is mastery.

THE END